

SOFT POWER AND THE QING STATE: PUBLISHING, BOOK COLLECTION, AND
POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CHINA

BY

LAWRENCE C. CHANG

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Kai-wing Chow, Chair
Professor Ronald Toby
Professor Rania Hunitington
Professor Dan Shao

Abstract

I explore the process by which the Qianlong emperor, who ruled China from 1736 to 1799, and his officials attempted to consolidate the political legitimacy of the Manchu ruling house over the Han Chinese populace through using institutions inside and outside the state to distribute imperial writings. The Qianlong emperor sought to appeal to the values of the Han Chinese literati in writings where he discusses his own understanding of Chinese ideals pertaining to statecraft, emphasizing how it is necessary for the ruler to share political power and concede to authority external to himself. Both officials and private publishers disseminated copies of the emperor's writings through a variety of channels, most notably commercial bookstores and academies. Active cooperation between officials and the local elite was also crucial in the use of institutions to collect books for the bibliographic project "The Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries", which the emperor initiated in order to showcase his support for civil learning. I argue that the variety of social classes and channels involved both in the distribution of imperially authored works and in the collection of books demonstrated an approach to consolidating political legitimacy that was more subtle and indirect than other methods that have been studied. I demonstrate that the eighteenth-century state that had ruled China sought to deploy soft power through the use of print media to appeal to the values of their subjects, reflecting strategies for affirming political legitimacy similar to those used by modern states.

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All mistakes are in the end my responsibility.

Abbreviations

GZDA, WJL-Gongzhong dang'an 宮中檔案, Wenjiao lei 文教類 (*Imperially Rescripted Archives, Division of Civil Education*). The First Historical Archives of China, Beijing

LST, SKQSHY-Leshantang quanji 乐善堂全集 (*The Complete Collection of Essays from the Hall of Delight in Doing Good*). Siku Quanshu Huiyao 四库全书荟要. Shijie Shuju, 1983.

RZHS, SKQSHY-Rizhi Huishuo 日知荟说 (*Knowledge Accumulated Day by Day*), Siku Quanshu Huiyao 四库全书荟要. Shijie Shuju, 1983.

TSSC-Tang Song shi chun 唐宋诗醇 (*Essence of Tang and Song Poetry*). Ran Ran 冉冉, ed. Beijing: Zhongguo sanxia chubanshe, 1997.

TSWC-Tang Song wen chun 唐宋文醇 (*Essence of Tang and Song Prose*). Ran Ran 冉冉, ed. Beijing: Zhongguo sanxia chubanshe, 1997.

QGZSL-Qing Gaozong Shilu 清高宗实录 (*Vertiable Records of the Gaozong Reign of the Qing Dynasty*). Zhonghua Shuju, 1985

ZXSKQSDA-Zuanxiu Siku Quanshu Dang'an 纂修四库全书档案 (*Records on Editing the Complete Collection of the Treasures*). Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1997.

All romanizations follow the *pinyin* system aside from titles and quotations.

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Introduction

The Qianlong 乾隆 Emperor (1711-1799, r. 1736-1796) ruled the Qing empire for much of the eighteenth century – an age of great peace and prosperity. Despite the Manchu Qing dynasty entering its second century of rule, the Qianlong Emperor continued to evince frequent concern about whether the Han Chinese population would continue to accept Manchu domination. Although Qianlong's grandfather, the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor (r. 1662-1722), and his father, the Yongzheng 雍正 Emperor (r. 1722-1736), both consolidated Manchu rule, the specter of Han resistance often haunted the Manchu ruling house. In the last years of the Yongzheng Emperor's reign, the dissident scholar Zeng Jing 曾靜 (1679-1735) attempted to incite Yue Zhongqi 岳鍾琪 (1686-1754), governor-general of Shanxi and Sichuan, to rebel against the Manchus. Although the incident came to naught, it profoundly affected the early years of the Qianlong Emperor's rule by revealing the undercurrent of anti-Manchu sentiment among the Han population. Shortly after ascending the throne, Qianlong recalled all published copies of his father's public rebuttal of Zeng Jing's accusations of misrule, brutality, and vice against the Manchus and also immediately ordered Zeng's execution.¹ From the very beginning of his reign, the Qianlong Emperor showed deep concern about the loyalty of his Han subjects and an interest equal to, if not stronger than that of his father, in the issue of political legitimacy.

The Qianlong Emperor attempted to allay his concerns and foster loyalty among the Han population in a variety of ways. In addition to punitive measures against anti-Manchu sentiment, Qianlong also made frequent imperial tours, funded huge intellectual

¹ Jonathan Spence, *Treason by the Book: Traitors, Conspirators, and Guardians of an Emperor* (New York: Viking, 2001), 239.

projects, presented himself visually in unique ways, and financially supported academies and religious sites all to fashion a Manchu identity as a capable ruler of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious empire. But, of these various ethnic groups, the Han Chinese could not be governed with the same strategies the Manchu rulers employed in controlling other ethnic groups. Governing the Han Chinese required the assertion and production of political legitimacy defined primarily in terms of the cultural values of the Han Chinese. Most importantly for this study, Qianlong engaged in a number of text-based projects designed to assert and re-assert the legitimacy of his authority over his Chinese subjects. In these texts, Qianlong utilized narrative techniques and discursive tropes from Chinese tradition to portray himself as both an ideal ruler and a Confucian literatus. Although emperors in the past had engaged in similar practices, the Qianlong Emperor was unique in distributing these writings to assert political legitimacy for the Manchu rule through both official and unofficial channels to actively mobilize print media—a technology of communications and literary culture of the Han Chinese.

We can glimpse the importance of Qianlong's use of the print medium in strengthening his political legitimacy from a memorial submitted by Shandong Governor Aertai 阿爾泰 (1677-1745) on 17 July 1761. Aertai's memorial relates a trip he made to Ji'nan to summon a five-year old prodigy named Zhang Yongqing. Zhang's purported talent was having read Qianlong's *Leshantang quanji* 樂善堂全集 (The complete collection of essays from the hall of delight in doing good), which was a collection of essays and other works the Qianlong Emperor composed during his youth. In the early years of his reign, Qianlong had ordered the printing and the distribution of the *Leshantang quanji* outside the Court for the edification of his subjects. Ortai's memorial

explains that Min Eyuan 閔鶚元 (1720-1797), the provincial education commissioner, had summoned Zhang Yongqing and confirmed that the boy truly had read Qianlong's work.² The significance of this memorial stems not from the literacy of a five-year old boy, but the obvious concern of Aertai and Min Eyuan to show the Qianlong Emperor that his works were being read by the Chinese population, particularly the impressionable young.

The Qianlong Emperor and his officials were aware of the potential of these writings to strengthen and legitimize imperial authority. As Harold Kahn has argued, Qianlong's *Leshantang quanji* 樂善堂全集 and *Rizhi Huishuo* 日知薈說 (Knowledge accumulated day by day), constituting his complete works, became "imperial writ" after his ascension. The government distributed them throughout the empire to "inspire officials and educate students" and gave them as gifts to officials at the highest levels of the bureaucracy. Some officials even suggested they be distributed in a manner similar to orthodox works such as the classics and histories.³ Although Kahn highlighted the importance that imperial officials attached to the wide circulation of imperial writings, he overlooked the specific processes, institutions, and actors involved in distributing these writings, especially the ambivalent but critical role of the officials in the production and circulation of these texts.

This study intends to fill these gaps by studying the strategies and channels used by the emperor and his officials to maximize the circulation of imperial writings during the eighteenth century in order to solidify the political legitimacy of the Manchu state.

² GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-182-034.

³ Harold Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), 169-170.

By studying the various approaches essential for ensuring the maximum distribution of Qianlong's writings, we can understand the various physical and ideological avenues the emperor and his officials used to reach their audience. This study is specifically focused on the Qianlong Emperor's appeals to the values and interests of his readers in his published works and the government's dependence on publishing for the production and representational performance of political legitimacy in the eighteenth century.

New Qing History and Identity Politics

The active mobilization of print media by the Qing emperors to appeal to Confucian values in order to reinforce their authority over the Han Chinese was central to the identity politics of the Manchu rulers, which itself is at the center of the debates raised by champions of the "New Qing History." New Qing History, often based on the use of Manchu or other non-Chinese language sources, emerged as a challenge to the older notion that the Qing rulers and their Manchu subordinates had been sinicized and assimilated into Chinese culture and that this acculturation was key to their effective governance over the empire. Ping-ti Ho, a champion of the conventional view, argued that the Manchu use of Ming dynasty administrative structures and their endorsement of Confucian orthodoxy represented Manchu sinicization and was key to the success of the Qing dynasty. He also dismissed the idea of a separate Manchu culture in the mid-Qing by pointing to factors such as the decline in the use of their language.⁴ Ping-ti Ho's argument echoed Robert Oxnam's explanation of how the Manchu regents, who ruled

⁴ Ho goes so far as to argue that it was only during the Qing that China became a Confucian orthodox state. Ping-ti Ho, "The Significance of the Ch'ing Period in Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 26:2 (February 1967), 191-92.

between the Shunzhi and Kangxi reigns (1661-1669), resisted, to no avail, the absorption of Chinese officials, institutions, and ideology in their governance of the empire.⁵

The long-term predominant emphasis on Han culture, to the negligence of other ethnic groups in the Qing, spurred various historians to challenge the underlying postulation of the sinicization thesis that the multiethnic Qing was reducible to China alone.⁶ The New Qing historians have authored a series of studies that have investigated the strategies used by the Manchus to accentuate their ethnic identity as well as specially-designed Manchu techniques to govern their Inner Asian subjects. Evelyn Rawski, for example, rebutted the sinicization thesis by arguing that the successful governance and empire building of the Qing was based almost entirely on its links to Inner Asian culture and the use of different administrative techniques and institutions in non-Han areas of the empire. She contests the idea that Han Chinese literati dominated Qing governance by focusing on the participation of the separate conquest elite in defense of the empire. She also focuses our attention on the use of non-Han languages in administration and Manchu education as well as the mobilization of Tibetan Buddhism to solidify Qing rule.⁷

Rawski and Joanna Waley-Cohen further de-emphasize the sinicization of the Manchus by elaborating on the use of shamanistic and Tibetan Buddhist rituals and Qianlong's

⁵ Robert Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback: Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency, 1661-1669* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 1-11.

⁶ Joanna Waley-Cohen summarizes this decentering of China in her synopsis. Joanna Waley-Cohen, "The New Qing History," *Radical History Review* 88 (2004), 195-96. James Millward critiques John Fairbank's emphasis on the tributary system and the Sinocentric model arguing that it ignores the contradictions that arise from considering the relationship of Inner Asia to the Qing empire. He explicitly warns against conflating the Qing with China. James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759-1864* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 6-15.

⁷ Evelyn Rawski, "Presidential Address: Re-envisioning the Qing: The Significance of the Qing Period in Chinese History," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 55: 4 (November 1996), 831-838.

presentation of himself as the reincarnation of the Bodhisattva Manjusri.⁸ The early works of the New Qing History have successfully shifted scholarly attention away from the sinicization argument in order to create a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of Qing rule over its multiethnic empire.

While the use of non-Chinese strategies to govern Inner Asia has been rightfully credited for their roles in governing the non-Han populations, efforts to undermine the sinicization thesis have already gone too far in downplaying Manchu acculturation to Chinese ways.⁹ Other scholars working along the line of the New Qing history, as well as those who came before them, have suggested that the pendulum has now swung too far in the other direction. Although Mark Elliott criticizes the sinicization argument for obscuring other narratives, he acknowledges the powerful influence of Chinese civilization on the Manchus and the necessity of rulers to adopt Chinese institutions for their own survival.¹⁰ Pei Huang likewise has recently argued that although the Manchus did focus significant attention on other ethnic groups, the Han Chinese were almost always at the forefront of Qing concerns in their governance of the Qing Empire. Especially salient is Huang's argument that the constructedness of ethnic identity allows us to conceive of clear ethnic boundaries between the Chinese and the Manchus even as cultural differences between them faded. Pei's intriguing argument that sinicization did not connote Chinese moral or cultural superiority is important for understanding how

⁸ Rawski explains how Qing emperors performed rituals based on shamanism and Tibetan Buddhism to legitimate their rule over Inner Asian subjects. Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A History of Qing Social Institutions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), Chapter 7. Joanna Waley-Cohen examines Qianlong's efforts to present himself as the reincarnation of the Bodhisattva Manjusri in order to legitimize his rule over his Tibetan Buddhist subjects. Joanna Waley-Cohen, "Religion, War, and Empire-Building in Eighteenth-Century China," *The International History Review* 20: 2 (June 1998), 340.

⁹ Rawski insists on the need to remove sinicization even as she admits that the Manchu rulers portrayed themselves as Chinese. "Presidential Address," 834, 842.

¹⁰ Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 27-28.

separate ethnic identities could co-exist while cultural differences declined.¹¹ Joseph Adler's demonstration of Qianlong's support for a Confucian temple and school in the city of Chengde highlights this coexistence of multiple ethnic identities in the Qing emperors themselves. He points out that the Qianlong Emperor needed to demonstrate his affinity for Confucian values.¹²

By conceptualizing a process in which the Manchu adoption of Chinese practices and beliefs did not necessarily conflict with the Manchus maintaining their separate ethnic identity, we can revisit the question of Chinese influence on Manchu governance while incorporating many significant contributions of New Qing History. The Manchu use of different strategies to govern Inner Asia and the Han geographical core should not distract us from the importance of Manchu acculturation to the values of the Han Chinese, the largest group under their rule. To better understand the Manchu political use of purported Chinese practices requires that we re-examine some of the ways in which the Manchu emperors engaged the Han Chinese population to enhance our understanding of Qing governance.

Political Legitimacy and the Appeal to Cultural Values during the Qing

A complete picture of Qing governance needs to account for the variety of strategies deployed to strengthen the authority of the Manchu ruling house. The need for a small ethnic minority to consolidate its power over a large multiethnic empire compelled the Qing rulers to rely on as many strategies as possible to achieve their

¹¹ Pei Huang, *Reorienting the Manchus: A Study of Sinicization, 1583-1795* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 11, 16-18.

¹² Joseph Adler, "The Qianlong Emperor and the Confucian 'Temple of Culture' (Wen miao) at Chengde" in *New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*, edited by James A. Millward, Ruth W. Dunnell, Mark C. Elliott, and Philippe Forêt (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 116.

political goals. A number of studies in the past have emphasized the significant role of military force in Qing conquest and rule. Qing rulers deployed the might of their armies to subdue lingering resistance to Qing rule within China proper as well as expansionist wars that extended Qing borders to Central and Inner Asia.¹³ These studies have also highlighted military achievement as an important part of Manchu political legitimacy.¹⁴

Aside from imposing their will through brute force, Qing rulers were also aware of the need to elicit more voluntary submission. Particularly important to the Manchus was to persuade every ethnic group they conquered that the Manchus possessed the criteria, as defined by the conquered groups that were necessary for voluntary acceptance of Manchu rule. The variety of qualities necessary to induce voluntary submission produced different practices and ideas to define political legitimacy, including the ability of the ruler to maintain territorial integrity of the empire. The idea of “The Great Unity,” or a single, unified empire, was indeed an important aspect of Chinese thought on political legitimacy adopted by the Manchus.¹⁵ Another definition of political legitimacy

¹³ Lawrence Kessler in his study of the Kangxi Emperor details the efforts involved in fighting the War of the Three Feudatories. Lawrence Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and The Consolidation of Qing Rule, 1661-1684* (University of Chicago Press, 1976), Chapter 4. Peter Perdue argues for the significance of the military history of the Qing in his explanation of the extent to which Qing armies were mobilized for the wars against the Zungars. Peter Perdue, “Fate and Fortune in Central Eurasian Warfare: Three Qing Emperors and their Mongol Rivals,” in *War in Inner Asian History*, edited by Nicola di Cosmo (Brill, 2002), 385-391. He clearly highlights the increasing reliance on military force to eliminate the Zungar state, even as Qing emperors simultaneously relied on the discourse of benevolence and moral suasion. Peter Perdue, *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 251.

¹⁴ Joanna Waley-Cohen draws our attention to how Qing rulers regarded military achievement and ability as an important criterion for an able ruler, and how they sought to showcase their own victories through various media. Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China: Empire and Military in the Eighteenth Century* (London: IB Tauris, 2006); Joanna Waley-Cohen, “Commemorating War in Eighteenth-Century China,” *Modern Asian Studies* 30: 4 (1996): 869-899.

¹⁵ Yuri Pines attributes the rise of the idea of *Da Yitong* during the Warring States period to the breakdown of the multi-state system and the lack of institutions to stem the frequency with which states were being annexed. Pines explains how popular support for unification was key to the rapidity with which the Qin state created the first empire and he also comments on the endurance of this idea throughout Chinese history. ‘The One That Pervades the All’ in *Ancient Chinese Political Thought: The Origin of ‘The Great Unity’ Paradigm*, *T'oung Pao* 86 (2000), 317-323. Jinxin Caojiaqi highlights the emphasis of the Northern Song statesman Ouyang Xiu placed on the ability to maintain unity and proper succession as key

of the Manchus concerned their own internal maintenance of traditional notions of orthodox succession to the throne, which in the Manchu Qing were evinced by the Yongzheng Emperor's anxiety over his reputation as a usurper.¹⁶

While these definitions of political legitimacy are important, they ignore the very institutions and practices used in the everyday relationships between the ruler and the ruled in defining legitimacy. Since a major focus of this study is the degree to which the Qing state in the eighteenth century can be considered authoritarian, I emphasize another definition of political legitimacy that focuses on the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, but one that also accounts for the agency of the subjects to modify the practices of the rulers (discussed below). Underlying my argument is the notion that Manchu emperors of the Qing consciously appealed to their subordinates, especially the Chinese officials and literati, in order to elicit more voluntary submission. These appeals by the Manchus were to the cultural values, rather than ethnic identity, of the Han populace. Relative to more traditional notions of political legitimacy, the working definition I will use throughout this dissertation recognizes that the dominant rulers had to conscientiously grant concessions to the ruled. The ruler, through his attempts to establish such a relationship, also appears less abstract and his practices more tangible. Therefore, I would argue, the strategies the Manchu rulers utilized to legitimate their rule effectively mitigated the harshness of their authoritarianism.

criteria for a dynasty to be considered legitimate. "Shuo Ouyang Xiu de zhengtonglun sixiang" (Concerning Ouyang Xiu's thoughts on legitimacy), *Shixueshi yanjiu* (Journal of historiography) 118 (2005), 32-37.

¹⁶ Pei Huang, *Autocracy at Work: A Study of the Yung-cheng Period, 1723-1735* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press for the International Affairs Center, 1974), Chapter 3.

Political Legitimacy, Cultural Values, and Soft Power

Most studies of political legitimacy begin with Max Weber. Max Weber defines politically legitimate power as operating on the basis of three sources: first, rational grounds, or the belief in the “legality” of normative rules under which power operates; second, traditional grounds, which consist in a belief in the sanctity of tradition; and third, charismatic grounds, which emanate from the heroism or unique character of a particular individual.¹⁷ Rodney Barker, in his discussion of Weber’s ideal-typical types, elaborates a fourth source that Weber mentions, but does not include in his formal list of types of legitimate authority. Barker calls this fourth type “the authority of substantive policies or values.”¹⁸ While the first three sources of legitimacy stem from government institutions, Barker argues, substantive values as a source of legitimacy derives from below. Barker thus shifts attention away from the state in defining political legitimacy and places it in society.¹⁹ Barker underscores the substantive values of society as providing a source of authority that is outside the perimeters of the state. In Barker’s construct, the ruler/state is simply an agent whose authorization stems solely from the ruled/society.²⁰ The merit of Barker’s argument is that it allows us to understand how private subjects shape and determine the actions of the public person of the ruler. Unlike Weber’s statist orientation, utilizing the authority of substantive values re-inserts the agency of subjects/society in creating a different but no less important notion of political legitimacy.

Barker’s notion of substantive values is an excellent interpretive tool to understand Manchu uses of different strategies and practices towards the various subject

¹⁷ Max Weber, “Types of Authority,” in *Political Leadership: A Source Book*, edited by Barbara Kellerman (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh, 1986), 232.

¹⁸ Rodney Barker, *Legitimacy and the State*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 49.

¹⁹ Ibid., 49-50.

²⁰ Ibid., 50-51.

ethnic groups within the empire to create and consolidate Manchu political authority. The agency of subjugated ethnic groups can be approached by reading the different strategies the Manchus employed against the grain to examine how they contained within themselves the substantive values of each of the ethnic groups embraced by the empire. In his attempts to convince Han Chinese of the legitimacy of Manchu rule, for example, the Qing emperor needed to demonstrate that the Manchus were “agents” or “transmitters” rather than the creators of Han Chinese values. The underlying idea was that as agents of Chinese culture the Manchus would be regarded by the subject Han population as legitimate rulers if they contributed to the protection and promotion of such values. In other words, the policies designed to govern the Han population had to be grounded in the values and policies cherished by Han subjects.

The strategies for enhancing the political legitimacy of the Qing state through the substantive values of their subjects is remarkably similar to what the political scientist Joseph Nye has termed “soft power.” Nye argues that soft power requires “a different type of currency—not force, not money—to engender cooperation. It uses an attraction to shared values, and the justness and duty of contributing to the achievement of those values.”²¹ He clearly sets the concept apart from more imposing forms of power: “Command power can rest on inducements (‘carrots’) or threats (‘sticks’). But there is also an indirect way to exercise power” through intangible means.²² He conceives this indirect form of soft power as an appeal to the values shared by the subjects of the ruler/state. Nye’s concept resembles Barker’s argument about substantive values in its stress on the appeal to the values of constituents as a way to elicit voluntary submission.

²¹ Joseph Nye, “The Benefits of Soft Power,” *Compass: A Journal of Leadership* (Spring 2004), 7.

²² Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: the Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), 31.

This strategy denotes the process through which rulers strengthen domination over subjects by submitting to their particular terms.

The Qianlong Emperor and his officials deployed soft power in the eighteenth century by catering to the values of imperial subjects. Qianlong, in particular, used soft power by publicly adhering to literati definitions of the ideal Chinese ruler in his writings and encouraged his officials and various elite groups to widely distribute these writings in order to demonstrate the legitimacy of his rule through Confucian norms of governance. This persuasion through publicly conforming to the criteria of political legitimacy as defined by the Han literati would greatly contribute to the security of the Manchu state in the eighteenth century.

Qianlong's willingness to appeal to the values of the Han literati is even more significant when we consider how it affected the political interests of the ruled. There are a number of studies that build upon Weber's distinction between obedience through coercion and obedience compelled by belief in the ruler's legitimacy.²³ These studies explain that belief in legitimacy can compel people to submit to authority at the expense of their own political, economic, and social interests, thus contributing to social stability. While Qianlong willingly sacrificed defining Manchu political legitimacy on his own terms to foster imperial rule, he also expressly emphasized the importance of delegating political authority to officials, which effectively undermined some of his power. Ironically, this delegation of power to the officials was an important virtue of a Confucian ruler, a cultural value the Han Chinese cherished.

²³ L. Richard Della Fave, "Towards an Explication of the Legitimation Process," *Social Forces* 65: 2 (December 1986): 476-500. Henry A. Walker, Larry Rogers, George M. Thomas, and Morris Zelditch, Jr., "Legitimizing Collective Action: Theory and Experimental Results," *Research in Political Sociology* 5 (1991): 1-25; Robin Stryker, "Rules, Resources, and Legitimacy Processes: Some Implications for Social Conflict, Order, and Change," *The American Journal of Sociology* 99: 4 (January 1994): 847-910.

The idea of the importance of delegating authority originated in Chinese political thought long before the eighteenth century. Alan Wood argues that political thinkers during the Northern Song (960-1127) limited the power of the sovereign even as they stressed the importance of revering him. Relevant to my argument is Wood's demonstration of how such political theory enhanced the power of subjects vis-à-vis the ruler. He argues, "the leading Sung political thinkers...did advocate enhancing the authority of the emperor. Authority, however, is not power. Although many Sung literati may have advocated centralizing the authority of the emperor, at the same time they also hoped that he would delegate his actual power to them....What they appeared to be granting him with their left hand, in effect, they were planning on taking away from him with their right."²⁴

The co-existence of imperial power with delegated authority makes sense if we understand David Beetham's argument about the concurrence of legitimacy with the personal interests of subordinates. Beetham, like Weber and Barker, lists a number of factors necessary for creating legitimate power, such as conformity to rules concerning the acquisition and exercise of power, the justifiability of rules through shared beliefs, and the consent of the ruled.²⁵ Significantly, Beetham elaborates on the importance of the consent of the ruled by arguing for the importance of power fulfilling the interests of the ruled: "Where the subordinate are not conceived as having any interests of their own meriting attention, independent of their utility to the dominant...there can be no moral

²⁴ Alan T. Wood, *Limits to Autocracy: From Sung Neo-Confucianism to a Doctrine of Political Rights* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995), x.

²⁵ David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1991), 19.

community between, and no legitimacy to the relationship.”²⁶ By understanding the relationship between the Qianlong Emperor and his Han Chinese officials, and the broader literati community, to be one predicated on the consent of the governed, we can also see that both had shared interests and their other interests were not always in conflict.

Qianlong apparently understood the link between the interests of his subordinates and his own legitimacy. His emphasis on the ideal ruler as willing to acknowledge external authority demonstrates a concession to the ideals and interests of the Chinese scholar-officials. The emperor’s stress on the importance of delegating power to subordinates legitimated the authority of those below him and also conformed to traditional Chinese political ideas. Embracing the interests and the values of his subordinates was a significant attempt to influence the literati and assert his legitimacy by appealing to and supporting the ideals established by Han literati centuries before.

Printed Texts and the Deployment of Soft Power in the Eighteenth Century

Qianlong’s decision to conform to both the values and the interests of Han Chinese elites necessitated the use of their preferred medium – the printed text – to spread and solidify his political legitimacy. The emperor regarded the use of print media—a practice culturally specific to the Han Chinese— to publicly endorse values of the Han literati as necessary to strengthen his control over the Han subjects. That is not to suggest that the Manchus or other ethnic groups did not have their own print culture, but that such cultures were often more restricted in circulation.²⁷ Since the production of

²⁶ Ibid., 59

²⁷ Evelyn Rawski has studied the proliferation of printed works in non-Han languages, both original works as well as translations of Chinese books. “Qing Publishing in non-Han Languages,” in *Printing and Book Culture in Late Imperial China*, edited by Cynthia Brokaw and Kai-wing Chow (Berkeley: University of

printed texts in Manchu was much less commercialized, it is unlikely that the Qing rulers found them a useful means to appeal to the values of the Manchu population. Furthermore, Qianlong's expressed disinterest in reports of increasing Manchu success in the civil service examinations and his desire to know more about their skills in horsemanship, archery, and the Manchu language suggests that works printed in Manchu were unlikely to have been used to publicly appeal to Manchu values for political purposes.²⁸

The use of printed texts to appeal to Han values, however, was an important aspect of Manchu legitimation of their rule. There are two primary reasons for Qianlong's use of print to cater to the cultural values of the Han: the importance of literacy and the pervasive influence of print culture. Abilities such as mastery of the Confucian canon and the composition of essays and poetry were regarded as essential for moral cultivation and proper governance. The civil service examinations, serving as the primary channel for bureaucratic recruitment, and the legal privileges and social status granted by examination degrees, both indicate the authority such learning conferred on scholars.²⁹ It was essential that the Manchu emperors also demonstrate their mastery of the Confucian classics and their ability to compose traditional style essays and poetry.

The authority emanating from such mastery was indispensable to ruling the Han

California Press, 2005): 304-31. Pamela Crossley mentions the circulation of Manchu works, but she describes them as a part of a private, independent world of Manchu literature. Pamela Crossley, *The Manchus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 12.

²⁸ Pamela Crossley, *Orphan Warriors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 26.

²⁹ Both Ho Ping-ti and Benjamin Elman argue that the civil service examinations were essential for reproducing the bureaucratic and social elite. While Ho emphasizes the institution of the civil service examinations as a vehicle for social mobility, Elman argues they served as a class barrier and reinforced intellectual conventions. Ping-ti Ho, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962); Benjamin Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Kai-wing Chow also underscores the desirability of an examination degree by demonstrating how literati repeatedly strove to pass the examinations even as they gained fame as private authors. Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004).

Chinese.³⁰ The use of print by the Manchu emperors, then, was a more important strategy for legitimating their rule over the Han Chinese than in dealing with other ethnic groups.³¹

Since the Han elite prized mastery over the Confucian canon and print culture, the Qing deployment of soft power in the eighteenth century was slightly different from how soft power is currently discussed. Joseph Nye argues that the exportation of American popular cultural media positively influenced international popular perceptions of the United States,³² but in so doing, Nye clearly lays the primary impetus for such exportation on groups outside of the state. By contrast, I would argue the deployment of soft power in the eighteenth-century by the Qing state was under greater official control and was aimed at the Han literati rather than a mass peasant audience who were illiterate. Although the Manchu emperors used cultural media such as printed works, the circulation of these works involved official supervision and initiative and the content of the works were aimed at a narrower, more elite audience.

There are several previous studies of how the Manchu Qing emperors legitimized themselves by appealing to the sensibilities of the Han Chinese literati. Lawrence

³⁰ Mark Edward Lewis argues that the consolidation of power by the Han state hinged on the formation of a classical canon. His study on the use of texts to strengthen political legitimacy during early China reveals the power of the written medium to enhance authority, particularly its ability to invest and project religious, administrative, and cultural authority to those outside of the government. Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999), 7-10. Although his study concerns early China, Lewis' argument regarding the power of written texts to politically reinforce legitimacy can profitably be applied to other periods of Chinese history. In his study of the *Siku Quanshu* project, R. Kent Guy also touches on the importance of the Confucian canon in establishing political legitimacy by explaining how exhibiting mastery over the canon was essential for any emperor in China to establish his authority. R. Kent Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries: Scholars and the State in the Late Ch'ien-lung Era* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 2.

³¹ Evelyn Rawski in her study of non-Han language printed texts explains how Manchu book culture, which included original texts as well as Manchu translations, did little to counter the assimilation of Manchus into Chinese culture ("Qing Publishing in non-Han Languages," 320-322). Joanna Waley-Cohen in her study of the valorization of military culture by the Qing emperors explains that emperors had to excel in civil learning to maintain order over the Han Chinese (*The Culture of War in China*, 3).

³² Nye, *Bound to Lead*, 194-95.

Kessler argues that the Kangxi Emperor, in addition to regularly receiving Confucian tutoring, won over former Ming bureaucrats either through special examinations or employed them in extraordinarily large compilation projects such as the official history of the Ming dynasty, the Kangxi dictionary, and the *Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今图书集成 (The complete collection of illustrations and writings from antiquity to the present).³³ The Yongzheng Emperor publicly asserted his commitment to Confucian values in a volume entitled the *Dayi juemi lu* 大义觉迷录 (The great righteousness resolving confusion) in response to accusations of Manchu brutality and misrule by the dissident Zeng Jing. Harold Kahn discusses the intensity of Qianlong's Confucian education and his efforts to publicly assert his commitment to Confucian statecraft in his essays.³⁴ All three emperors obviously understood the importance of asserting legitimating values and the role of print in so doing.

While these scholars emphasize the Confucian education of the emperors and their writings, there has been almost no attention paid to the intersection between the circulation of texts and the political aims of the emperor and his bureaucracy. Harold Kahn and Jonathan Spence have studied imperial portrayals without elaborating on how they were circulated. Cynthia Brokaw and Lucille Chia have deepened our understanding of the changes in commercial publishing demonstrating its rapid growth between the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.³⁵ Scholars have used Brokaw and Chia's works to demonstrate how elites used the commercial imprints for their purposes such as

³³ Kessler, *K'ang-hsi and The Consolidation of Qing Rule*, Chapter 6.

³⁴ Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, Chapters 7, 8, 9.

³⁵ On the growth of the book industry, see: Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge: University Asia Center, 2007), 8-10; Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian, 11th-17th centuries* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 247.

spreading literati identity or expressing dissent through novels.³⁶ Even though these works have a much greater appreciation for the significance of print in late imperial China, but none of them have addressed how imperially authored works circulated through such channels or how the state used the publishing industry for its own purposes.

Although the Qing government established an Imperial Printing Office (*Wuying dian* 武英殿) in 1680, it was only during the eighteenth century that the Manchu state began utilizing non-official channels such as commercial publishing as well as their own institutions to strengthen the authority of the emperor through maximizing the circulation of politically legitimizing texts. The use of commercial publishing by the state to appeal to the values of the ruled was a less imposing method of communicating legitimizing messages than direct government intervention such as mandating official recitation to popular audiences of the Sixteen Maxims by the Kangxi Emperor (expanded by the Yongzheng emperor) or mandatory reading of the *Dayi juemi lu*. The state's use of the private publishing industry can be conceived of as part of Qianlong's broader use of soft power to reinforce Manchu political legitimacy.

In addition to other state uses of print such as patronage of literary projects or censoring allegedly seditious passages, the Qianlong emperor employed print in a more complex way to legitimize his rule by appealing to the substantive values of the Han Chinese. As I argue in Chapter 1, the Qianlong Emperor's essays on Tang and Song poetry and prose, as well as his statecraft writings, were used to publicly endorse the values and interests of the Han Chinese elite. To produce and circulate these writings,

³⁶ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 223; Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 25; Kai-wing Chow demonstrates how literati took advantage of a large reading public by selling their writings both to earn a livelihood and to establish their authorial reputations thus challenging literary standards of the examinations. Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, Chapter 4.

the emperor, the bureaucracy, and the elite participated in the active mobilization of print media to reinforce Qianlong's political legitimacy. Officials, the literati, and booksellers helped distribute Qianlong's writings through commercial sale, private publishing, and other channels. The same groups, as I discuss in later chapters, also used similar channels for the collection and evaluation of books for the *Siku quanshu* 四库全书 (The Complete Collection of the Treasuries) bibliographic project that, like imperial writings, also served to demonstrate Qianlong's support for the values of the Han Chinese elite.

Michel Foucault's concept of governmentality can help us understand the use of non-official avenues such as the commercial book market for political legitimation. Foucault explains how a government, aside from more direct intervention, can influence its constituents by what he calls apparatuses. These are various institutions that the state uses to influence discourse. Examples of apparatuses include systems of knowledge and education.³⁷ In the case of the Qing state's deployment of soft power, the book market was an apparatus for transmitting Confucian discourse for the purpose of indirectly influencing public perceptions of the government. It thus functioned as an apparatus to maximize exposure of the emperor's image as a legitimate ruler of his subjects, the elites of whom had long embraced print culture as an integral part of their means of social and intellectual communications. The significance of this apparatus distinguishes Qianlong from earlier Qing emperors in the production and display of legitimacy. In contrast to Yongzheng, who strengthened his political legitimacy by relying mostly on official

³⁷ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume 1* (New York: Vintage Books, 1988-1990), 139. In a separate essay, Foucault also discusses the aims of governmentality. He explains that the end goal of governance is the welfare of the population as opposed to the sovereign hoarding resources through what he calls mercantilist means. This is strikingly similar to Confucian discourse concerning a ruler's benevolence and concern over the people's welfare. Michel Foucault, "Governmentality." In *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: with two lectures by and an interview with Michel Foucault*. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller, eds. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1991), 90-100

channels, Qianlong utilized more diffuse and subtle practices, especially non-official institutions like the printing industry and relied on the market demand of the reading public to help circulate positive images of the imperial regime.

The strategic use by the state of publishing and book market in the eighteenth century brings up the related issue of the extent to which the government attempted to regulate them. As I argue in this study, the state alternated between *laissez-faire* and interventionist policies depending on different circumstances and times. Adjusting the level of intervention according to different emphases of Qianlong's larger project was important for maximizing the effectiveness of his efforts to assert political legitimacy. The emperor usually used a *laissez-faire* approach towards the commercial book market rather than impose imperial demand for forceful dissemination of imperial writings. He frequently instructed officials to restrain themselves in their supervision of the printing industry. Reining in any official impulse in regulating the printing industry and working with the system to maximize circulation of the imperial image through commercial sale was a subtle approach to reinforcing the authority of the emperor. While officials could and did intervene more heavily in the operations of the book market when handling issues it deemed critical, they only played a modest role in the circulation of politically legitimizing texts. By giving a greater measure of liberty to booksellers and those who privately printed and circulated such works, the Qianlong Emperor and his officials hoped to simply allow market forces to play their part in distributing imperial works.

Whether we are talking about the Qianlong emperor advocating the sharing of political power with his officials, or their cooperation with local elites in disseminating politically legitimizing works, this study reveals how the mobilization of print media by

the Qing state to assert political legitimacy reflected different levels of interaction and negotiation between the state and society during different periods in the eighteenth century. It is precisely these different levels of interaction and negotiation between the state and society that have complicated our understanding of the nature of the Qing Empire during the eighteenth century.

The Emperor, the Bureaucracy, and the Elites

One unique manner in which the Qing deployed soft power in the eighteenth century involved the role of officials and elites in collecting, distributing, and evaluating texts. While the Qianlong Emperor undoubtedly deemed it important to circulate legitimizing texts, he was not personally involved in the process. Examining the interactions between the emperor, the bureaucracy, and the non-governmental elite in their efforts to circulate politically legitimizing texts allows us to investigate shifting relationships between these three groups over time.

Examining the shifts in the power relationship between these three groups offers us a better understanding of the nature of the Qing state in eighteenth-century China, particularly regarding the question of whether it can be considered authoritarian. Previous scholars, such as Guo Chengkang and Pei Huang, have emphasized the extent to which Qing emperors imposed their prerogatives on the bureaucracy. Using maritime trade as his case study, Guo argues that the Qing emperors were always the final decision-makers and their officials were simply sources of information.³⁸ Pei Huang, in his *Autocracy at Work*, provides numerous examples of how the Yongzheng Emperor

³⁸ Guo Chengkang, *Shiba shiji de Zhongguo yu shijie, zhengzhi juan* (China and the world in the eighteenth century: Political history) (Shenyang: Liaohai chubanshe, 1999), Chapter 3.

strengthened his control over the bureaucracy.³⁹ Qianlong's southern tours are another example of successful imposition of imperial prerogatives as the emperor overrode the objections of his officials to make the trips. In all of these examples, the emperor clearly prevailed over the bureaucracy.

Other scholars have emphasized the extent to which the power and authority of the Qing emperors was limited and even constrained by bureaucratic officials. Philip Kuhn's study of the soulstealing scare of 1768 foregrounds the bureaucratic inertia that hampered Qianlong's efforts to exercise arbitrary power, to the point that even his attempts to circumvent routine personnel management and evaluation, and exercise personal control of appointments, could not overcome the efforts by the bureaucracy to protect itself by delaying reports and hiding information.⁴⁰ Through a study of the origin and formation of the Grand Council, Beatrice Barlett examines the process where Qing emperors found their power constantly being routinized by institutions they initially created to consolidate their personal control over the bureaucracy or the Manchu princes. She explains how the Grand Council evolved from a small and informal advisory body under the personal direction of Yongzheng to a larger body under Qianlong because of the Council's increased responsibilities, which served to distance it from the emperor. While Qianlong could ultimately override any specific decision made by the Council, much of the governance of the state remained in the hands of the Grand Councilors.

³⁹ Pei Huang depicts Yongzheng as an autocrat. Yongzheng weakening the power of the censorial system, originally designed to monitor the actions of the emperor, and developed the secret memorial system that successfully concentrated greater power in Yongzheng's hands by enabling him to circumvent the outer court and directly access information sent to him by trusted officials. Huang, *Autocracy at Work*.

⁴⁰ Philip Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), Chapter 9.

These studies underscore the various constraints the Qing emperor encountered in exercising his power through the bureaucracy.⁴¹

This dissertation presents a more complicated approach to the relationship between the Qing emperors and their bureaucrats by demonstrating the evolving nature of that relationship over time. In the first stage, the emperor was more active in composing and editing his legitimizing texts, but his role rapidly diminished in the circulation stage. Although the emperor did facilitate the distribution of printed texts by issuing edicts permitting their circulation, and while he did participate in the review of books for the *Siku Quanshu* project, it was the officials and the non-governmental elites who took the initiative to circulate imperial texts and undertake the bulk of the onerous reviews for the *Siku Quanshu* project. Unquestionably, Qianlong initiated the efforts to assert his political legitimacy, but he did so without excessively controlling the efforts of his agents, who provided the main thrust behind the movement of distributing printed texts throughout society. Therefore, in the first stage of this process, the Qianlong Emperor was dominant and his officials deferred to him (as opposed to objecting to the content of his writings), while it was the bureaucracy and local elites who initiated printing, distribution, and circulation of his legitimizing works.

The way the state and the non-governmental elites collaborated to distribute and collect texts in order to legitimate the rule of the Manchu emperors also complicates our understanding of the relationship between the two sides. A number of studies depict this relationship in different ways. Several scholars emphasize the influence of the emperor and the bureaucracy upon society. Early research on literary inquisitions by L.

⁴¹ Beatrice Bartlett, *Monarchs and Ministers: The Grand Council in Mid-Ch'ing China, 1723-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

Carrington Goodrich as well as by An Pingju and Zhang Peiheng portrays the state as meeting little resistance in their search for and destruction of seditious materials.⁴²

Pierre-Etienne Will argues that it was not the local elites, but the state's mobilization of resources and direction of distribution channels that was the main force behind famine relief.⁴³ Michael Chang has shown how Qianlong, not only prevailed over the objections of his officials regarding his southern tours, but also furthered the interests of different non-governmental social groups during his southern tours.⁴⁴ These studies focus on the power of the emperor or the bureaucracy to impose their prerogatives on society with little resistance.

Modifying this emphasis of state power over society are studies that focus on the limitations of the state's ability to control the outcome of their attempts to advance specific policy agendas. In contrast to the previously mentioned studies portraying the literary inquisition as meeting little resistance from scholars, R. Kent Guy argues the literary inquisition progressed rapidly only after scholars, expectant officials, and other members of the local elite began to use it to promote their own agendas and settle scores.⁴⁵ Other studies emphasize the ability of the local elite to negotiate and resist state

⁴² L. Carrington Goodrich portrays the literary inquisition as a successful imposition of state will onto the populace. An and Zhang in their study of the eighteenth-century literary inquisition also present such a characterization. L. Carrington Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition of Ch'ien-lung* (1935, reprint: New York, Paragon Books, 1966); An Pingju and Zhang Peiheng, eds., *Zhongguo jinshu daguan* (An overall study of forbidden books in China) (Taipei: Zhu you xuan chuban youxian gongsi, 1992).

⁴³ Pierre-Etienne Will and R. Bin Wong, *Nourish the People: The State Civilian Granary System: 1650-1850* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), Chapter 7.

⁴⁴ Such efforts included protecting the economic interests of merchants by controlling prices of goods and appealing to the values of the literati by holding poetry competitions. Michael Chang, *A Court on Horseback: Imperial Touring and the Construction of Qing Rule: 1680-1785* (Cambridge: Harvard East Asia Monographs, 2007), Chapters 5-7.

⁴⁵ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 190-197. Timothy Brook's study of the *Siku Quanshu* project portrays the state as being even less able to accomplish its goals regarding censorship. He cites factors such as the diffuse nature of woodblock printing and the inability to establish a empire-wide booksellers' guild. He explains that Qianlong and his officials were only able to destroy a limited number of works as opposed to Goodrich who believed the number was quite large. Timothy Brook, *The Chinese State in*

incursions into its sphere of activity. Mary Backus Rankin in her study of the Foshan charitable granaries in the early and middle period of the Qing explains how they were mostly founded and managed through the initiative of local elites who were able to resist official intervention. Although the elites needed official permission to construct the granaries, and had to regularly submit reports to officials, they successfully resisted official demands for both greater information about and increased roles for officials in the management of these granaries.⁴⁶ Likewise, Susan Mann demonstrates the state's ineffectiveness in using tax farmers who began extorting the populace, necessitating the need for merchants to self-regulate their markets and the self-collection of official taxes, making official payments in return for reduced tax quotas.⁴⁷

Other scholars emphasize the collaboration and complementarity of both the state and the elites by stressing their common interests. Thomas Lee argues that the bureaucracy and the elite shared a Confucian ideology that united their common aspirations to foster the public good.⁴⁸ There was also an overlap between the concepts of *gong* and *si* (public and private interests). Frederic Wakeman argues that there was

Ming Society (RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 125-136.

⁴⁶ Mary Backus Rankin, "Managed by the People: Officials, Gentry, and the Foshan Charitable Granary, 1795-1845," *Late Imperial China* 15: 2 (December 1993): 1-52.

⁴⁷ Susan Mann, *Local Merchants and the Chinese Bureaucracy, 1750-1950* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987). Although Mann effectively argues that such a tax-farming system was necessary, even though the benefits of this arrangement seem to be mutual, the state ended up ceding authority and control over such an important matter even as it received the desired funds.

⁴⁸ Thomas H. C. Lee, "Academies: Official Support and Suppression," in *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China*, edited by Frederick P. Brandauer and Huang Chun-chieh (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994). Lee argues that the gentry saw themselves as extensions of the state in ensuring public welfare. Only in extreme cases of conflict, such as Donglin movement, was there a shift to direct confrontation. Lee thus shifts emphasis away from anything that might incline the gentry towards conflict. Rankin argues that mutual commitment to the goal of providing for public welfare, founded on shared Confucian ideology, was the major factor in eliminating friction between local officials and the local elite. Mary Backus Rankin, "The Local Managerial Public Sphere: Refashioning State-Societal Relations in Late Imperial China," in *Civil Society versus the State in the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese Traditions* (Paris: Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1991).

facilitated cooperation (and collusion) between officials and local gentry.⁴⁹ Mutual interests that required the cooperation of both sides also helped minimize conflict between the bureaucracy and the local elite. In line with these studies, this research shows that compromise and negotiation between officials and the local elites was necessary since each had interests that required the cooperation of the other for fulfillment. The undersized local administration and shortage of funds that constantly beset the Qing bureaucracy⁵⁰ necessitated government reliance on the elite to fulfill social functions.⁵¹ The local elites also relied on local officials for legal protection.⁵²

This study seeks to demonstrate how this complex process of collaboration, negotiation, and resistance between the Qing state and the local elites unfolded in the production and circulation of imprints designed to justify Manchu control over the Han populace. It underscores the constraining power of both the ideological—Confucian

⁴⁹ Frederic Wakeman, "Boundaries of the Public Sphere in Ming and Qing China," *Daedalus* 127: 3 (Summer 1998), 169-171, 178-180.

⁵⁰ Robert Antony and Jane Kate Leonard, "Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs: An Introduction," in *Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs: Qing Crisis Management and the Boundaries of State Power in Late Imperial China*, edited by Robert J. Antony and Jane Kate Leonard (Ithaca: East Asian Program, Cornell University Press, 2002).

⁵¹ Fuma Susumu explains how benevolent halls required such great financial resources and manpower that there was no room for the exercise of arbitrary power on either side. Fuma Susumu, "Zenkai zento no suppatsu (The emergence of benevolent societies and benevolent halls)," *Min Shin jidai no seiji to shakai (The Politics and Society of the Ming and Qing)*. Ono Kazuko, ed. (Kyoto: Jinbun kagaku kenkyujo, 1983), 229-231. The government also needed the local elite for their roles as managers and enforcers of public order in the fight against social problems such as tax evasion. Frederick Wakeman, "Introduction: The Evolution of Local Control in Late Imperial China," in *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, edited by Frederic Wakeman, Jr. and Carolyn Grant (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 6; Jerry Dennerline, "Fiscal Reform and Local Control: The Gentry-Bureaucratic Alliance Survives the Conquest," *Conflict and Control in Late Imperial China*, 101-107.

⁵² One example concerns the ability of merchants to petition higher authorities in the case of improper or excessive official interference or extortion, with steles recording the verdicts as precedents to deter future cases. Richard Lufrano, "Maintaining the Equilibrium: Balancing Interests of Commerce and Local Government," Antony and Leonard, eds., *Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs*, 80-81, 93-97). Zhang Zhongmin, while emphasizing the liturgical role of associations, also explains that, "Only when a commercial organization was unable to resolve problems did local government intervene." Zhang Zhongmin, "The Civil Role of Sojourner and Trade Associations in Shanghai during the Qing Period," Antony and Leonard, eds, *Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs*, 116.

model of rulership—and technological and cultural environment—print media and literary culture—that any Manchu ruler had to come to terms with in his attempts to govern the Han populace without constant resort to brute force. The successful exercise of soft power by the Manchu rulers hinged upon public endorsement of values specific to the Han Chinese, particularly Confucian notions of governance and the exaltation of writing. It was crucial to produce political legitimacy through publishing and circulating writings in a display of the emperor's mastery of literary skills and cultivation of virtues the Han Chinese literati considered critical for an ideal ruler and a scholar. The employment by the Qianlong emperor of soft power in governing the Han Chinese required his public endorsement, if not genuine embrace, of the specific cultural values endeared to the Chinese population. The Qianlong emperor's interests in creating images as a Confucian ruler, a patron of literary arts, and a poetry critic was an example par excellence of the exercise of soft power—the use of complex non-violent strategies—by the Manchu emperors in governing the Han subjects. The exercise of that soft power was contingent upon the reliance of print media, a technological and cultural condition that distinguished the Han subjects from the emperor's other subjects in the Inner Asian region.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One analyzes several essays in the *Leshantang quanji* and the *Ruizhi huishuo* as well as the Qianlong Emperor's commentaries on Tang and Song period prose essays in order to sketch the image that Qianlong sought to portray in writings that were later circulated. This image represented an attempt to appeal to Han Chinese literati

values both in terms of morality and literature. Qianlong demonstrated his embrace of the same morality of the Han elites in his tracts on morality, most notably the need to acknowledge authority external to the figure of the emperor.

Chapter Two discusses changes in the imperial image during the later part of Qianlong's reign. Whereas earlier writings reflected an obliging posture in an attempt to appeal to the Chinese literati, Qianlong's later writings tend to portray a sterner ruler through his comments on the obligations of subordinates. Qianlong himself, then, shifted the discursive tone of his own image from one acceding to the interests of his audience to a more forceful didactic approach in which he lectured on the responsibilities of his subordinates to show loyalty and deference to the ruler. His authority in morality clearly was derived from the same value system of the Han elites, not from Manchu culture, which the Chinese elite did not share. Qianlong also placed increasing emphasis on military achievement, which, I argue, was meant not only as a Manchu value, but a Han Chinese one as well.

In Chapter Three, I utilize a number of unpublished memorials to argue that the circulation of texts written by the Qianlong emperor on statecraft and literary criticism, facilitated by the use of official and non-official channels by different social groups, represented a way of exerting influence that was more accommodating and indirect than previous scholarship has characterized it to be. The range of these official and non-official channels demonstrates a flexibility, resourcefulness, and determination of the state to maximize the spread of the imperial image. I argue that the bureaucracy in these efforts showed a greater degree of initiative even as they were fulfilling the emperor's directives.

Chapter Four, through the use of unpublished and published official reports, delineates how the same channels through which legitimating texts circulated were used to collect books for the *Siku Quanshu* project. In this case, bureaucrats showed even more initiative and intervention in directing the collection of books for inclusion in the *Siku Quanshu*, but local elites also played an active role. Overall, this chapter demonstrates the significance of the collaboration between the state and the elites for the legitimization of Manchu rule by shedding more light on the mobilization of non-official social groups to maximize acquisitions for the project.

In their efforts to strengthen political legitimacy through the circulation and the collection of print media, the emperor, the bureaucracy, and the local elite formed a loose union in which authority was asserted in varying levels of directness between the three sides during different phases of the eighteenth century. This complexity involving varying levels of control defies simple characterization of the nature of the Qing state in the eighteenth century. Elaborating on the political implications of the content of imperial writings and focusing on the mechanics of their circulation allows us to examine how the emperor, the bureaucracy, and the elites were involved in the production and circulation of discourse on the political legitimacy of the Manchu regime during eighteenth-century China.

Chapter One

Qianlong's Appeal to Han Chinese Values

As discussed in the introduction, Qianlong's Confucian portrayal sharply contrasts with the ways Qianlong represented himself to his non-Han subjects. New Qing History scholars have attempted to correct an overemphasis on the acculturation of Qing rulers and by pointing at the efforts of the Manchu rulers to maintain their own identity as evidenced in their Banner system and their distinctly non-Han image. Although these studies do highlight important and previously ignored aspects of Qing identity politics, they have also tended to diminish the importance of their unremitting interest in representing themselves as sharing the culture of the largest ethnic group under their control. This chapter examines how the Qianlong emperor exhorted specific values of and appealed to the interests of his Han Chinese audience through publishing his own writings and comments on different genres of writings.

The Qianlong Emperor pursued imperial legitimacy by discursively portraying himself in specific ways in his early writings. While various aspects of the imperial image might seem predictable given that Qianlong drew from Confucian tropes and discourses in order to gain the support of the Han Chinese literati, this chapter emphasizes the extent to which Qianlong accommodated the values of his audience by making concessions to Chinese political and cultural authority as an example of his use of soft power.

Qianlong's literary works demonstrate his active role in shaping how he was to be presented to Han Chinese officials and elites. All evidence suggests Qianlong was the major force behind the construction of his image while the bureaucracy played a

secondary role by arranging the distribution of his literary works. Qianlong's active participation in the construction of his image contrasts sharply with the manner in which the image of Louis XIV was constructed and presented to the eighteenth-century French public. Peter Burke explains how the Bourbon regime relied on the bureaucracy and private subjects to create and deploy a wide variety of oral, visual, and written media to demonstrate the political legitimacy of the French monarch. The government hired people from various professions, including artists, poets, historians, lawyers, and philosophers, and also supported institutions such as academies, to produce works in different media praising Louis.⁵³ Burke barely mentions Louis himself taking any initiative to shape his own image, except to help revise the second edition of the history of his reign.⁵⁴ Louis XIV's distance from the construction of his royal image suggests the uniqueness of Qianlong's personal involvement in crafting his own image in his literary works.

In his early written works, Qianlong went beyond emphasizing the responsibility of the ruler in governing society to focus on the importance of modesty in accepting remonstrance from his Han officials. This respect towards the learning of the Han Chinese official contrasts sharply with the distrust towards Chinese literary culture exhibited during the beginning half of the seventeenth century by the early Manchu rulers, who were more wedded to governance through imposition of martial rule.⁵⁵ In addition to appealing to Han values and interests when discussing statecraft, Qianlong also conformed to Han literary tastes in his discussion of literary compositions. His

⁵³ Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), Chapter 4.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 119.

⁵⁵ Robert Oxnam, *Ruling from Horseback: Manchu Politics in the Oboi Regency, 1661-1669* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 1-11

commentaries on Tang and Song poetry and prose discuss the importance of natural feeling and criticize the imposition of rigid form, which reflected the sentiments of literati during the mid-eighteenth century. What is particularly significant in Qianlong's commentaries is his elaboration of the connection between literary style and social order. Literary forms were important, Qianlong argued, but excessive feeling in content should be avoided, particularly because of its connection to artifice and embellishment as representative of decadence.

These ideas – the problem of literary forms, the socially disruptive qualities of excessive feelings, and the futility of artifice and embellishment – reflected prevailing ideas among Han Chinese literati about literary works. Qianlong's indirect intervention in the cultural realm of his subjects served to temper Manchu autocracy. Qianlong's attitude towards both statecraft and literary composition stayed within the mainstream of Han Chinese values, and the length to which he elaborated on the Confucian idea regarding the important role of officials in governance indicates a deliberate attempt to cater to the substantive cultural norms and values of his subjects.

The Imperial Printing Office and the Political Power of Print

In the Qing, various forms of media were often used to assert political authority, whether in public rituals at the Temple of Heaven, the imposing architecture of the Forbidden City, or in Qianlong's patronage of the arts.⁵⁶ Like these important and

⁵⁶ Kahn outlines the variety of ways that Qianlong displayed his image through public acts of filial devotion towards his mother, authorship of literary works, commissioning of visual portraits, performance at state ceremonies, and his imperial tours to the south. Harold Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes: Image and Reality in the Ch'ien-lung Reign* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). The strategies outlined by Kahn used to display the imperial image are similar to those used by King Yongjo of Choson Korea. Jahyun Kim Haboush outlines how Yongjo used his coronation ceremony, ritual sacrifices, and essays on his views concerning Confucian statecraft to portray himself as the ideal ruler. She also details how he

frequently used forms of political representation, the medium of print was also an important way in which the Qianlong Emperor attempted to claim and produce political legitimacy. Possibly even more so than in images or state ceremonies, Han Chinese placed great belief in the power of learning and written texts to effect moral transformation and strengthen political authority.⁵⁷ The Qianlong Emperor exploited this belief in the power of the written word to influence perceptions of the ruling house through the publication and circulation of his writings. Many of those writings were published by the Imperial Printing Office.

In 1680, the Kangxi Emperor authorized the creation of the Imperial Printing Office (*Wuying dian* 武英殿) as a unit of the Imperial Household Department (*Neiwu fu* 內務府). This step reflected the growing awareness of Qing rulers and their officials concerning the power of print to contribute to effective governance. The Imperial Printing Office developed into a substantial undertaking with a large staff, well-defined administrative structure, and clearly delineated division of labor.⁵⁸ Divided into an Office of Overseers of Works (*Jianzao chu* 監造處) and an Office of Proofreading (*Jiaodui shuji chu* 校對書籍處), the Printing Office employed 23 officials and 84 technical workers at the beginning of its establishment in 1680, with outside assistance

supported this image by enacting social and economic reforms, particularly the military tax system, as well as making excursions to observe the populace. *A Heritage of Kings: One Man's Monarchy in the Confucian World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Kahn, in another work, focuses on the use of art and architecture to celebrate the majesty of imperial rule, particularly in Qianlong's placement of inscriptions and seals onto the paintings he collected. Harold Kahn, "Matter of Taste: The Monumental and Exotic in the Qianlong Reign," in *The Elegant Brush: Chinese Painting Under the Qianlong Emperor, 1735-1795*, edited by Ju-hsi Chou and Claudia Brown (Phoenix: Phoenix Art Museum, 1985), 295-296. See also: Evelyn Rawski, "Re-Imagining the Ch'ien-lung Emperor: A Survey of Recent Scholarship," *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly* 21: 2 (2003), 14-15.

⁵⁷ Mark Edward Lewis, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999).

⁵⁸ Shiow-jyu Lu Shaw, *The Imperial Printing of Early Ch'ing China, 1644-1805* (xxx: Chinese Materials Center, 1983), 60.

brought in for larger projects, reflecting the seriousness the government placed on this new office and its work.⁵⁹

Over the next century, the Printing Office became known for the outstanding quality of the works it produced. As outlined in a manual authored in the middle of the eighteenth century, the procedures and work within the Office had advanced to a considerable degree. Upon an imperial order to reprint certain rare works for the *Siku quanshu* project, Jin Jian 金簡, the superintendent of the Imperial Printing Office, compiled this manual detailing the manufacture of wooden movable type to replace the previously used copper types. The manual describes the procedures for carving and setting the types, including measurements such as length and width, and for handling the materials as well as cost estimates.⁶⁰

The large number of staff in the Imperial Printing Office and the complexity of the procedures used to guarantee the quality of officially printed texts indicates the seriousness with which the state attempted to harness the power of print for strengthening their rule. The printing of various imperially approved texts meant to edify and instruct officials and the populace, such as works commissioned by the Shunzhi Emperor, the sixteen maxims of the Kangxi Emperor, as well as Qianlong's *Leshantang quanji* 樂善堂全集 and the *Rizhi huishuo* 日知薈說, clearly demonstrates the intent of the Qing emperors to use the Imperial Printing Office to assert their influence over Chinese subjects.⁶¹ His decision to eventually publish his commentaries on the *Essence of Tang*

⁵⁹ Ibid., 9-11. For the organization of the Imperial Printing Office, see: Xiang Si, "Qing gong wuyingdian keben" (Printed works of the Qing imperial printing office), *Dongfang yishu* (Eastern art) 18 (May 2006), 10.

⁶⁰ Chin Chien, *Chinese Printing Manual*, translated by Richard Rudolph (New York, NY: Typophiles, 1954), xiii-xxi. Shaw, *The Imperial Printing*, 53-55.

⁶¹ Shaw, *The Imperial Printing*, 18-19, 21.

and Song Prose (Tang Song wenchun 唐宋文醇) and Essence of Tang and Song Poetry (Tang Song shichun 唐宋詩醇), was truly significant for his greater public valorization of Chinese literary culture compared to his grandfather and father. Efforts to manage and produce these officially-authored and sponsored works indicates the state's increasing use of print for its own political purposes, but it the motivation behind these activities stemmed from the desire of the Qing emperors to portray themselves as conforming to the values and interests of the literati

Concerns about the Legitimacy of Manchu Rule

The question of what particular imperial image Qianlong sought to convey to the Han Chinese literati raises the question of why he felt the need to reaffirm his legitimacy at all, particularly when Manchu rule had already been consolidated by his grandfather and father. Scholars point to an emerging feeling of alienation among the ruling classes and the social elite during the latter Yongzheng period. The Yongzheng Emperor had enacted reforms that curtailed political and material benefits as well as authorized political purges and campaigns against factionalism.⁶² These harsh policies exacerbated conflict along ethnic lines as well as intensified tension within the ruling class itself, all of which seemed to strongly necessitate a policy change during the early years of Qianlong's reign.⁶³

⁶² Bai Xinliang, *Qianlong zhuan* (Biography of Qianlong) (Shenyang: Liaoning jiaoyu chubanshe, 1990), 17; Sun Wenliang, Zhang Jie, and Zheng Chuanshui, *Qianlong di* (The Qianlong emperor) (Changchun: Jilin wenshi chubanshe, 1993), 36-45.

⁶³ Yan Aihong, "*Qianlong Leshantang quanji banben gaiding kao*" (An examination of the revisions of "The complete collection of essays from the hall of delight in doing good" by the Qianlong emperor) (M.A. thesis, Renmin University, 2005), 51-52.

One of the early edicts Qianlong issued upon ascending the throne reflected the emperor's sense of the need to alleviate this growing feeling of alienation among the officials and the social elite toward the Manchu regime. Qianlong's edict defended the harshness of his father's rule by arguing that bureaucratic malfeasance necessitated the reforms, but he also elaborated on the need to balance severity with imperial magnanimity.⁶⁴ Qianlong followed up this edict by demonstrating his benevolence with policies that aimed to improve the material condition of the people's lives, pardon criminals, and reduce ethnic conflict.⁶⁵ He instituted practices that raised the status of degree holders, including exempting them from certain punishments, and increased the ranks of officials working in education and the Imperial Academy.⁶⁶ Another of his important strategies was grace examinations, which were held in addition to the regular civil service examinations, in order to maximize the recruitment of talent, which had the intended corollary effect of providing additional opportunities for elite advancement.⁶⁷ Qianlong also held special recruitment examinations during his southern tours.⁶⁸ All of these measures indicate a perceived need to express goodwill towards both officials and literati.

These acts of benevolence, of course, contrast with the harsh measures Qianlong took to eliminate threats to his rule upon ascending to the throne, such as his ordering the execution of Zeng Jing, recalling all copies of the *Da Qing juemi lu*, and crushing what he perceived to be court factions surrounding his trusted officials Zhang Tingyu 張廷玉

⁶⁴ Bai, *Qianlong zhuan*, 18; Sun, Zhang, and Zheng, *Qianlong di*, 36-45; Mark Elliott, *The Qianlong Emperor: Son of Heaven, Man of the World* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2009), 21.

⁶⁵ Yan, "Qianlong," 52-53.

⁶⁶ Bai, *Qianlong zhuan*, 217.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 16-19.

⁶⁸ Chang, *A Court on Horseback*, Chapter 6.

and Ortai 鄂爾泰.⁶⁹ Quite possibly, the severity of these measures made Qianlong cognizant of the need to present a benignant image of his new rule.

The Qianlong Emperor sought to significantly ameliorate the alienation of officials and literati during the Yongzheng reign by appealing to the interests of his officials and the literati. However, he also realized that granting imperial pardons, promoting officials, and holding special examinations were insufficient for gaining the support of the Han Chinese literati. As Joseph Nye argues about soft power, it is not enough to grant economic benefits to secure political legitimacy; such efforts must be made in tandem with appeals to the substantive values of the subjects of the state. The Qianlong Emperor, through discussing abstract topics such as the proper ruler or Confucian principles, made such appeals by defending impersonal institutions in a way that showcased his personal erudition. To a ruler, the honor of his ancestors, a strong personal image, and celebrating time-honored institutions were important ways to ensure political legitimacy. This intersection of the personal with the political meant that imperial appeals to his subjects served to simultaneously bolster Qianlong's personal glory.⁷⁰

To communicate such political and personal assertions, Qianlong resorted to the use of print to bolster his political legitimacy. Publications of personal writings and

⁶⁹ Elliott, *The Qianlong Emperor*, 22-23. Also refer to R. Kent Guy on Qianlong's concern over factional conflict in which he discusses not only the factional divide between Zhang Tingyu and Ortai, but also the case of Hu Zhongzao, an official Qianlong ordered executed because he wrote a poem criticizing Zhang Tingyu and thus himself. Guy also discusses Qianlong's anxiety over the anti-Manchu writings of Lu Liuliang and his denouncing of the factional conflict that surrounded the *Tongzhitang jingjie* (Classical commentaries from the Tongzhi Hall). Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 28.

⁷⁰ A particularly telling example of how impersonal institutions can showcase personal glory is Haboush's account of the records of Yongjo's achievements, including his attendance at Confucian lectures and the frequency with which he read books. What is interesting is her description of how Yongjo's role in relation to his tutors changed, as he went from being lectured to by them to lecturing them in the course of his development. Haboush, *A Heritage of Kings*, 63-65.

commissioned works by emperors were not unique in the long history of imperial rulers in China, but the Qianlong was unique not only in the sheer volume of his published writings, but also in the degree of publicity he sought as he attempted to identify with literati values.⁷¹ The Kangxi Emperor's writings, as Jonathan Spence have discussed, aside from the original and edited versions of his final valedictory edict, were almost entirely private works, which accounts for the frankness of his admissions concerning his emotional and physical state. The Yongzheng Emperor used the *Da Qing juemi lu* (The great righteousness resolving confusion) to proclaim his virtues rather than to confess any imperial shortcomings. Pei Huang suggests the Yongzheng Emperor did not place cultural legitimacy high on his agenda to deflect criticisms of his authoritarian tendencies – Yongzheng's was utilitarian towards political ideology and remained aloof from any particular school of Confucianism. Even though Yongzheng presented himself as a Manchu ruler who had embraced Confucian values, his endorsement was essentially utilitarian. Yongzheng always emphasized the Legalist need for law and punishment (as opposed to a Confucian emphasis on moral education) to maintain social order. As Huang perceptively points out, Yongzheng's commitment to Confucianism was almost purely nominal.⁷² Yongzheng's lack of commitment to Confucianism likely contributed to the alienation felt by officials and literati and prompted Qianlong's need to display his commitment to Confucianism, which was likely to be quite sincere given the rigor of his education and the tone of his writings. Compared to the private nature of Kangxi's writings and Yongzheng's reputation for harshness, then, it is quite remarkable that the

⁷¹ Harold Kahn quotes several studies that point out the exceptional volume of Qianlong's writings. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, 10-11.

⁷² Huang, *Autocracy at Work*, 35-50.

Qianlong Emperor so publicly hinted at his own fallibility in his widely circulated discussions of the ideal ruler.

Staging Identity versus the Internalization of Beliefs

Scholars of the New Qing History have extensively examined the construction and performance of ethnic identity in the Qing period. Throughout these works, Qing emperors are often portrayed as utilizing various discursive and material techniques in governing various ethnic groups under Manchu control. This focus on the diverse strategies in appealing to different ethnic groups within the Qing Empire has either assumed or oblivious to the possibility that Manchu emperors had internalized some of the values of their subjects. Specifically, Qianlong's intense efforts to portray himself as fulfilling the traditional Han definition of an ideal ruler have been characterized as simple political pandering, but such an interpretation views Confucian values as an expedient political tool rather than something genuinely expressed. The idea that Qianlong's demonstration of public conformity to Confucian values was simply a political ploy rather than an expression of genuine belief is simply an extension of popular anti-sinicization arguments among New Qing historians.

Emphasis on the performance of Manchu identity by Qing emperors has led to a dismissal of those imperial practices designed to appeal to Confucian values. Pamela Crossley focuses on the historicity of the construction of Qing identity for the purposes of producing political legitimacy – “the burden of the emperorship to impersonate its diverse peoples was a primary theme in the representations – historical, literary,

ideological, architectural, and personal – of universal rule.”⁷³ Crossley’s thus emphasizes the importance of the coexistence (as opposed to mutual exclusivity) of multiple identities for Qing emperors, mentioning the importance of exhibiting commitment to Confucian norms even as she attempts to deconstruct categories such as Han or Manchu.⁷⁴ By concentrating on the performative character of ethnic identity by Manchu emperors, Crossley effectively argues against the idea that the Qing emperors internalized Confucian norms. Instead, Confucian ideology appears simply as a politically expedient tool that, in her words, the state did not actually believe in.⁷⁵ Qianlong, in particular, Crossley argues, rejected the idea that Manchu rulers needed to be culturally transformed in order to rule effectively.⁷⁶ From this perspective, Manchu commitment to Confucian norms was simply a performative political tactic designed to pacify their Han Chinese subjects.

By dismissing the Manchu emperor’s assertion of a genuine commitment to Confucian norms, the New Qing historians ignore the power of a rigorous education to induce internalization of the norms being taught. While Erving Goffman recognizes the socially performative aspects of identity, he delineates two extremes on the spectrum of performance – one in which the subject lacks conviction about their performance and another who believes in the values being expressed. It is the performer who believes in what they are expressing, Goffman argues, who is most effective in convincing the

⁷³ Pamela Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 2.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 230.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 260-261. She argues that it was Yongzheng’s emphasis on the importance of cultural transformation for political legitimacy in *The Great Righteousness* that led to that publication being recalled by Qianlong.

audience in the veracity of the ideas being expressed.⁷⁷ One journeys from a lack of belief in one's performance to genuine commitment through constant repetition.⁷⁸ That is, a person becomes inseparable from the role when performed often enough.

Speaking of Qianlong, his Confucian training was certainly intense enough to induce internalization of the relevant cultural norms. Qianlong is noted for the rigor of his Confucian education and is well known for flaunting his erudition in front of high-ranking Han officials.⁷⁹ A passage from a collection of anecdotes on Qing official life authored around 1814-1815 by the Manchu official Zhao Lian 昭璫 titled *Xiaoting zalu* 嘯亭雜錄 (*Miscellaneous records from the Whistling Pavilion*) not only asserts that Qianlong edited texts in his spare time, but that he also won the praise of Han officials for explaining difficult poems, teased them about their lack of knowledge of the *Zuozhuan*, and their failure to pinpoint the origins of poetic allusions.⁸⁰ Qianlong's ability to intellectually best his highest-ranking Han officials suggests, vide Goffman, that he had internalized both Confucian norms and popular intellectual practices (citing poetry, glossing obscure passages) that accompanied his education. If Goffman is correct that self-conviction enhances the ability to persuade the audience, then Qianlong's assertion of Confucian norms possessed a genuineness that facilitated his legitimation towards his Han subjects.

⁷⁷ Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life* (1959, reprint: The Overlook Press, 1973), 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 19-20.

⁷⁹ Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, Chapter 7.

⁸⁰ Zhao Lian, *Xiaoting zalu* (*Miscellaneous records from the Whistling Pavilion*) (1814-1815, reprint, Zhonghua shuju, 1980), 26. The years for the original publication date are in Endymion Wilkinson, *Chinese History: A Manual, Revised and Enlarged* (Cambridge: Harvard-Yenching Institute Monograph Series, 2000), 953.

The Qianlong Emperor and Confucian Norms

Early in his reign, the Qianlong Emperor authored two works that contain an expressed commitment to Confucian norms. *Leshantang quanji* (The complete collection of essays from the hall of delight in doing good), is a collection of Qianlong's exercises composed during his adolescent education, published as a 40-*juan* edition in 1737. It was distributed as gifts to officials⁸¹ as well as made available for reprinting in bookstores; the latter will be discussed in Chapter Three. It is accompanied by his *Rizhi huishuo*, a 4-*juan* work that served something like a diary of his education. In these works, the Qianlong Emperor focused on the basic values regarded as central to social order rather than on metaphysical theories elucidated by Neo-Confucian philosophers. Qianlong asserts the primary importance of central Confucian tenets, such as the welfare of the people and supporting a hierarchical social order, as the ultimate goal of government, especially as they pertain to stability. Throughout his texts, Qianlong was more concerned with demonstrating his understanding and possession of fundamental Confucian virtues than commenting on the metaphysical elucidations of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian philosophers since the Song dynasty.

The Qianlong Emperor placed special focus on the virtue of modesty in his writings. Such an emphasis was a deliberate attempt to minimize the distance between the lofty ruler and lowly subjects. To attract talented officials, he acknowledges the importance of imperial humility and expressed his desire to listen sincerely to their remonstrance.⁸² Qianlong, like his ancestors, was thus aware of the Confucian dictum

⁸¹ *Qing Neifu keshu dang'an shiliao huibian* (Collected and Edited Historical Materials on Files Pertaining to Book Printing in the Qing Imperial Household Department), ed., Weng Lianxi (Yangzhou, Guangling shushe, 2007), 107, 117, Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, 169

⁸² Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, 178-179.

against the wanton use of power and the value of exhibiting modesty and accepting remonstrance from virtuous officials. In recognizing authority external to the imperial body, Qianlong softened the edge of his authority in classic Confucian terms.

Qianlong actually endorsed the values and interests of his audience to a greater degree than has been previously portrayed by scholars. Harold Kahn rightly highlights Qianlong's discussion of modest and humility, but focuses exclusively on Qianlong's discursive practices rather than examine whether he actually acted out such values. In fact, Qianlong not only expressed his humility and modesty, but also granted his audience the right to question his authority and offer criticism of the throne. Regardless of whether he tolerated actual criticism, his voluntary public exposure to criticism early in his reign was remarkable given his later fear of sedition.

The maintenance of social order, in Qianlong's view, was predicated on whether he could accept remonstrance from his Han officials. In the *Rizhi huishuo*, Qianlong argues that the presence of forthright ministers at court is not so much a reflection of their own uprightness as it is the rectitude of the ruler; flattery is less the fault of ministers than the weakness of the ruler. Posterity praises rulers for accepting remonstrance, Qianlong acknowledged, more than the ministers for point out his faults.⁸³ By stressing the ruler's virtues in heeding remonstrances to such an extent, Qianlong was making himself particularly vulnerable to potential criticism if his rule proved ineffective.

In several essays in *Leshantang quanji*, Qianlong elaborates on the importance of imperial tolerance for sustaining proper rule (sections later cut from the abridged version of the work). Early in his reign, Qianlong evinced a particular concern with the importance of the ruler as opposed to those who would assist him. Yan Aihong correctly

⁸³ *RZHS, SKQSHY*, 251-601.

notes that Qianlong did author some essays that emphasize the importance of the ruler's advisors – a historical essay criticizing Guan Zhong for failing to help the Duke Huan of Qi 齐桓公 and one on the Tang minister Li Jiang and his role in sustaining his dynasty.⁸⁴

In most of his essays, however, Qianlong argues that the rise and fall of dynasties depends on whether the ruler has the tolerance to accept criticism and advice from his subordinates. To place such weight on the ruler was to subject himself to scrutiny and make himself vulnerable to judgment. Without subjecting himself to such scrutiny, Qianlong argued, genuinely talented scholars would conceal themselves by becoming hermits while crafty people of mediocre talent would occupy powerful positions at court.⁸⁵

Citing historical precedents, Qianlong also placed great weight on Confucian virtues such as tolerance and forgiveness. In his essay, *Tolerance will win the Hearts of the People* (*Kuan ze de zhong* 寬則得眾), Qianlong acknowledged the traditional Confucian notion of the importance of the emperor to morally guide his subjects:

From antiquity, kings were mandated to protect the land so that those near and far would admire them and to perfume with virtue and bathe with righteousness. Without humanity one cannot win their hearts and without magnanimity one cannot pacify his person (*feiren wuyi de qi xin er feikuan wuyi an qi shen* 非仁無以得其心而非寬無以安其身). Although the two are named separately, the principle is the same. If one is too scrupulous and thus without companions, and uses righteousness to reproach others, it will be hard to conduct oneself. Only with magnanimity and widespread rearing with tolerance can all entrust their lives. If one is able to express magnanimity, to forgive and tolerate faults, to pardon trivial matters and complete one's greater virtue, then people will be grateful and gladly and sincerely submit. If one does not act thusly and is petty, short-tempered, and harsh, then even if one is diligent in government like Qin Shihuang

⁸⁴ Duke Huan was a famous ruler of the state of Qi during the Spring and Autumn Period. Guan Zhong was his prime minister.

⁸⁵ *LST, SKQSHY*, 350-298.

[the first emperor of the Qin dynasty] and Emperor Wen of the Sui, what use will it be?⁸⁶

Qianlong thus centers the emperor, and downplays the role of advisors and ministers, in thinking about how to maintain effective rule. While the assignment of this much responsibility to a ruler glorifies him, it also opens the ruler to severe criticism if he failed to resolve major problems. An essay in the first edition of the *Leshantang quanji* entitled *Kuanyu wenrou zuyi yourong* 寬裕溫柔足以有容 (*Tolerance and Gentleness is Sufficient for Magnanimity*) voices similar ideas:

If one is not a sage with virtue and rank and does not tolerate them with magnanimity (*kuanyu* 寬裕), tend to them with beneficence, cherish them with mildness, and care for them with gentle modesty, then one can seldom find one's proper place. If there is one thing in the world that is not in its proper place, it is due to deficiencies in magnanimity and incompleteness of humanity. If humanity is not complete, then righteousness, propriety, and wisdom cannot be properly developed. Thus magnanimity is the fountain of respect and distinction (*rendao buquan ze yi li zhi jie buneng de qi zheng yi, shi you rong suoyi wei zhi jingbie zhi shou ye* 仁道不全則義禮智皆不能得其正矣，是有容所以為執敬別之首也。⁸⁷

Qianlong was too educated, too familiar with the examples of past rulers, to be unaware of the potential danger of assigning such a role to the ruler. That he still voluntarily made himself so vulnerable, at least discursively, suggests the degree to which he genuinely embraced the values of Confucianism. Elsewhere he commented on the model of rulership:

Therefore, among kings who rule the world, there is not one who does not regard humanity as the root. The application of humanity has four distinctions: Magnanimity (*kuan* 寬) results in widespread tolerance, so that there is nothing that is not loved. Enrichment results in the

⁸⁶ Yan, "Qianlong *Leshantang quanji*," 42-43.

⁸⁷ *Leshantang quanji*, The National Library of China, *juan* 1.

flourishing of governance, so that there is nothing that is not reared. Mildness results in peace and comfort, so that there is nothing that is not cherished. Gentleness results in pliancy residing in the mind and heart, so that there is nothing that does not submit⁸⁸

The dramatic tone of these three passages is in striking contrast to Qianlong's other discussions of these virtues in his formal edicts. Upon ascending the throne, Qianlong tempered his advocacy of tolerance with warnings about its limitations and warned officials against wanton behavior. One month after becoming emperor, Qianlong issued another edict on balancing leniency with severity.⁸⁹ Such edicts issued so soon after succeeding to the throne raises the question of why Qianlong left his more dramatic statements on the importance of magnanimity in the first edition of the *Leshantang quanji*, which was published at roughly the same time. The degree to which he espoused the virtues of tolerance and mildness in this first edition of his works makes their omission from the abridged edition quite striking – lending credibility to Yan Aihong's argument on the evolution of Qianlong's ideas on rulership.⁹⁰

This posture during the early years of Qianlong's reign went beyond emphasizing the importance of modesty to emphasizing the need to trust officials. In the *Rizhi huishuo* 日知薈說, (Knowledge accumulated day by day), Qianlong praises Shan Tao 山濤, a Jin dynasty minister famed for his ability to select the worthy for office and his care in not besmirching the righteousness of officials.⁹¹ To praise a minister who exercised such initiative reflects a confidence on Qianlong's part in delegating power to officials, which contrasts with attempts later in his reign to intervene in their duties. Qianlong's mention of Shan Tao is in addition to his constant praise for the Tang Minister Wei Zheng, famed

⁸⁸ Yan, "Qianlong *Leshantang quanji*," 42.

⁸⁹ Elliott, *The Qianlong Emperor*, 20-21.

⁹⁰ Yan, "Qianlong *Leshantang quanji*."

⁹¹ RZHS, *SKQSHY*, 251-602.

for his bluntly critical remonstrance, which was sufficiently sharp to elicit both anger and praise from the Taizong Emperor.⁹² Praising a minister who occasionally offended his ruler for the sake of remonstrance indicates the degree to which Qianlong supported empowering officials to advise their rulers.

Qianlong could praise such a figure because of his understanding of the ruler-minister relationship. Qianlong argued that while rulers were naturally averse to granting ministers too much power, a crafty minister with excessive power caused the same damage as a mediocre minister who avoided the exercise of power. Thus, powerful and selfless ministers ensured the security of the state and protected the people. Qianlong asserted that it is the mediocre ruler who is averse to granting power to his ministers, but it is the wise ruler who grants them power without either reducing their own or allowing such officials to gain unnecessary power. Qianlong concluded that this balancing of interests prevented anyone from monopolizing power.⁹³

Another passage in the *Leshantang quanji* reflects Qianlong's great effort to bridge the theoretical gap between minister and ruler. While he still asserted the naturalness and necessity of the exalted position of the ruler over the minister, he also emphatically pointed out the importance of interaction between the two.⁹⁴ The particular terms he used, *jiao* 交 and *yi* 義, suggest a significant degree of intimacy between ruler and subject. The *Hanyu da cidan* defines *yi* as "emotional bond" (*jiaoqing*, *qingyi*) while *jiao* is described as referring to friends. This is significant given not only the role of the five relationships (ruler-subject, parent-child, siblings, husband and wife, and friendship) as the cornerstone of Confucian social order, summarized in the Confucian concept of the

⁹² Harold Kahn discusses the imperial praise of Wei Zheng. Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*.

⁹³ *RZHS, SKQSHY*, 251-603.

⁹⁴ *LST, SKQSHY*, 350-294.

“rectification of names” (*zhengming* 正名), but also how friendship is a non-hierarchical relationship and thus potentially disruptive to social order. Norman Kutcher analyzes a number of incidents across several time periods to articulate the widespread anxiety among certain literati that friendship could disrupt other more hierarchical bonds.⁹⁵ With this point in mind, Qianlong surprisingly chose to describe the bond between ruler and minister in terms usually reserved for friendship. Such ideas might have drawn criticism for their impropriety and risked creating social disruption, but Qianlong chose to express them anyway.

Qianlong’s public embrace of Han Chinese values in the *Leshantang quanji* went beyond touting well-known Confucian virtues. Although he portrayed himself in classic Confucian terms as a moral exemplar to his subjects, balancing the forces of heaven and earth, he also downplayed the role of imperial might in effective governance. Essential to any and all successful reigns, Qianlong argued, was the emperor’s talent in selecting appropriate officials and his own humility in accepting the criticism of his officials. Governing the empire was not simply a matter of awing subjects into submission, but it was also necessary to portray himself as granting concessions to authority external to the imperial body.

As will be discussed later in this chapter, although Qianlong positioned himself to assert the authority of a literary critic, he also elaborated on the idea of respecting the authority to others in his literary criticism. The *Tang Song wenchun* is a collection of prose essays authored by famous literati during the Tang (618-907) and Song (960-1279) dynasties with commentaries ostensibly authored by Qianlong himself. The Imperial

⁹⁵ Norman Kutcher, “The Fifth Relationship: Dangerous Friendships in the Confucian Context,” *The American Historical Review* 105: 5 (2000): 1615-1629.

Printing Office published this 50-*juan* anthology in 1738. It, like other works, was distributed as gifts⁹⁶ in addition to being circulated in bookstores. The anthology was an expansion of a Ming (1368-1644) dynasty collection edited by a literatus named Mao Kun 茅坤, who selected works by Han Yu, Liu Zongyuan, Ouyang Xiu, Su Shi, Su Che, Su Xun, Wang Anshi, and Zeng Gong. The official Zhu Xin added the works of Li Ao and Sun Qiao in the Qing.

The *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (*Catalogue of the Complete Collection of the Treasures*) describes the *Tang Song wenchun* hinting about Qianlong's relationship with past and present literati. The entry explains that Qianlong regarded the selections of Chu Xin 储欣 as insufficiently judicious and personally directed the final selection of writings. That the collection was meant to assert imperial authority is indicated by the last line of the entry in the *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao*, which asserts that Qianlong's broad literary judgment was superior to that of Mao Kun.⁹⁷

Several of the commentaries in the *Tang Song wenchun* highlight the importance of the ruler deferring to authority outside the imperial body. The Qianlong Emperor touches on this theme in his commentary on an essay by Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824) entitled *Questions on Yu* (*Dui yu wen* 对禹问), which discusses the differences between the mythical emperors Yao, Shun, and Yu in terms of expressing concern for the people and passing the throne onto worthies (Yao and Shun) versus princes (Yu). The commentary states:

Is the righteousness of submitting to Heaven and following the people not obvious? Observing Chang Li's [Han Yu's] words, one can see how they

⁹⁶ *Qing Neifu*, 110.

⁹⁷ *Siku quanshu zongmu tiyao* (*Catalogue of the Complete Collection of the Treasures*), Yong Rong and Ji Yun, ed., (Haikou Shi: Haikou chubanshe, 1999), 1037.

supplement what Mencius did not say. As it stands, the people are the heart of Heaven so that to concern oneself deeply with the people and to obtain their heart is to obtain the heart of Heaven. To return to the root and extend it to its utmost is to surpass the righteousness of what Mencius said about how ‘When Heaven gave the kingdom to the worthiest, it was given to the worthiest. When Heaven gave it to the preceding sovereign, it was given to him.’”⁹⁸

This excerpt is particularly striking in that Qianlong used the phrase “following the people” (*congmin* 从民) suggesting his authority derived from below. For the emperor to claim that the ultimate source of his authority comes from his subjects suggests great confidence in believing that his position as ruler was not threatened by such concessions.

This faith that a concession to his subjects would strengthen rather than weaken imperial authority contrasts with the insecurity of the Hongwu Emperor (also known as the Taizu Emperor), who founded the Ming dynasty. As John Dardess has shown, the Hongwu Emperor’s autocratic tendencies were constantly expressed in edicts and writings on the importance of centralized control, law, and social hierarchy as well as an excessive reliance on corporal punishment.⁹⁹ Benjamin Elman notes the Hongwu Emperor’s repugnance for Mencius’ ideas on the authority of the ruler being derived from the people. Hongwu interpreted Mencius’ idea as a threat to state sovereignty. He attempted to remove the *Mencius* from the reading list for examination candidates and Mencius himself from the state ceremonial sacrifices for Confucians. Although officials managed to keep the *Mencius* in the examination curriculum, a large portion of the work

⁹⁸ TSWC, 1997, *juan* 1 (p. 4). I use James Legge’s translation of this phrase by Mencius. Mencius, *The Works of Mencius*” Translated with Critical and Exegetical Notes, Prolegomena, and Copious Indexes by James Legge (Canada: General Publishing Company, 1970), 358.

⁹⁹ John Dardess, *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites and the Founding of the Ming Dynasty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 196-197.

was excised.¹⁰⁰ While the Yongle Emperor (r. 1402-1424), the third emperor of the Ming dynasty, found justification for his usurpation of the second Ming emperor in some of the taboo passages in the *Mencius*, some Ming scholars “still were careful to set limits to Mencius’ discussion of the legitimate grounds for officials and the people to oppose an evil ruler. For the passages that earlier had enraged the Hongwu emperor but were tolerated by Zhu Di [the personal name of Yongle], Hu Guang chose commentators who stressed that Mencius’ words applied only to the chaotic historical situation of the Warring States period. Accordingly, Mencius stood as a guide to the past. His criticism of ancient tyrants could not be translated into a binding precedent for later, ‘enlightened’ ages.”¹⁰¹ This caution surrounding this section of the *Mencius*, despite its restoration by the Yongle Emperor, indicates how easily an insecure ruler could interpret it as subversive.

It is telling that the Qianlong Emperor himself lauded the Mencius’ ideas to indicate his confidence that conceding authority to his subjects would legitimate his position rather than subvert it. One phrase that the Hongwu Emperor found offensive was Mencius’ quote from the *Book of Documents*. Qianlong cites the specific phrase in his commentary on an essay by Ouyang Xiu 歐陽脩 entitled *A Memorial on Deleting the Sections on Divination from the Standard Commentaries on the Nine Classics* (*Lun shan qu jiujiang zhengyi zhong chanwei zhazi* 论删去九经正义中讖纬札子):

“*The Book of Documents* states ‘The Heavens see as my people see; the Heavens hear as my people hear.’ The inclination of the people’s hearts is the omen given by the Heavens. The people comprise the soul of the myriad things, the heart of the Heavens and the Earth, and the spirit of the

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Elman “The Formation of ‘Dao Learning’ as Imperial Ideology During the Early Ming Dynasty,” in *Culture and State in Chinese Society: Conventions, Accommodations, and Critiques*, edited by Theodore Huters, Bin Wong, and Pauline Yu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 72-73.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 74.

five elements. To not observe the people and yet to observe the clouds, things, birds and beasts--is this not to glorify the ends while slighting the root? This is also to deviate from the words of the sages. [Yet] fulsome Confucians do not discern this and circulate their prophecies throughout schools to reach the masses. Despite their being words of women and children, it is such a trifling affair to cause harm to the hearts of the people!”¹⁰²

This commentary explicitly asserts that the people are the source of imperial authority. Assertions by the ruler that his power is ultimately derived from his subjects, while potentially winning their favor, also amounts to the ruler subjecting himself to their evaluation and ultimately empowers them to question his authority. It is arguably a risky method of political legitimation requiring great confidence, which the Qianlong Emperor seemed to possess.

Qianlong further empowers his subjects in a commentary on Su Shi’s *On the Performance of Palace Examination Candidates* (*Ni jinshi dui yushi ce* 拟进士对御试策). In his essay, Su Shi opposed the reforms of his time:

Could anyone in regarding the people’s affliction as his own pain have acted this way [Qianlong is likely referring to the reforms]? This is how one must respect the Heavens and follow the masses (*congzhong*). We must follow the ancestral teachings. Is this not the effective medicine of Shenzong? This is indeed the principle of the emperors of antiquity.¹⁰³

Qianlong also elaborates on the power of the people in his commentary on Su Shi’s *Another Report to the Emperor* (*Zai shang huangdi shu* 再上皇帝书), wherein he describes how the people in responding to excessive taxation “did not submit to his commands but submitted to his intentions.”¹⁰⁴ It is significant that the Qianlong Emperor should praise disobedience towards a ruler for the sake of morality. He is attempting to

¹⁰² TSWC, *juan* 29 (382).

¹⁰³ TSWC, *juan* 46 (604).

¹⁰⁴ TSWC, *juan* 46 (597).

legitimate his position by submitting himself to the values that his subjects are expected to judge him by.

In other commentaries, the Qianlong Emperor attempts to shorten the distance between the ruler and his subjects by stressing the importance of communication between them. He emphasizes the importance of consensus between an emperor and his people in his commentary on Su Shi's *Lun bianjiang yinni baiwang xiansi tiliang bushi zhazi* 论边将隐匿败亡宪司体量不实札子 (*A Letter on Concealment of Failure by the General Stationed at the Border and the Unreliable Investigation by the Central Government*). In the original essay, Su Shi warns that lack of communication between high and low, exacerbated by crafty and sycophantic ministers, results in the people being vulnerable to afflictions. Qianlong's commentary supports the emphasis on communication by stressing the importance of both cooperation between officials and the necessity of the ruler to receive information.¹⁰⁵ He reiterates the importance of learning about the affairs of the people (*xi minshi* 习民事) in his commentary on another of Su Shi's works, *On Broadening the Criteria for Evaluating and Recruiting Scholars* (*Henglun guang shi pian* 衡论广士篇), an essay on the importance of recruiting virtuous scholars, not bandits, into government service. In his commentary, Qianlong argues that recruiting those mostly known for literary fame will result in official ignorance of people's affairs.¹⁰⁶ Although Qianlong does not say so, this could only result in ignorance on the part of the ruler. While the lofty position of the emperor necessarily demanded a certain degree of respectful distance, the Qianlong Emperor recognized the danger of being too remote from his subjects. It is no surprise that in addition to couching the relationship between

¹⁰⁵ TSWC, 1997, *juan* 48 (631-632).

¹⁰⁶ TSWC, 1997, *juan* 34 (450).

an emperor and his officials in terms of friendship, he should also attempt to encourage closeness between himself and his subjects by stressing the importance of dialogue.

In addition to submitting himself to the possibility of censure by stressing the responsibilities of the ruler, Qianlong took a similar gamble by asserting that his authority ultimately derived from outside himself. His stress on delegating power to subordinates, praise of subjects who asserted their prerogative towards rulers, and emphasis on communication between ruler and subject all demonstrate a concerted effort to appeal to readers under his rule. Since this importance of the ruled is rooted in Confucian values, Qianlong was attempting to legitimate his authority by publicly demonstrating submission to the specific values and interests of his Han subjects. In contrast to other famous emperors, Qianlong portrayed himself and the ideal ruler in more conciliatory terms. In light of the paranoia that elicited such caution from these earlier emperors, Qianlong's favorable comments on the *Mencius* suggests the paradoxical manner in which Qianlong legitimized his rule by conforming to Confucian statecraft ideals.

It is significant that Qianlong displayed such an affinity with these prose writers. Han Yu, Su Shi, and Ouyang Xiu were all famous statesmen, known not only for their poetry and prose, but also for their controversial political career. Han Yu was exiled after vehemently criticizing the veneration of the Buddha's bone relics in a famous essay while Su Shi was exiled for criticizing the reforms of Wang Anshi. Ouyang Xiu was twice demoted for his support of Fan Zhongyan, a prominent Song politician who was the target of much criticism.¹⁰⁷ The writers whose ideas on statecraft Qianlong praised were outspoken critics of aggressive government. What is more, they engaged in activities that

¹⁰⁷ Frederick W. Mote gives more information on Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi. Frederick W. Mote, *Imperial China, 900-1800* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 123-126, 153-156.

could be interpreted as partisan politics. Qianlong's praise is thus surprising in light of his aversion to factional conflict.

Fallibility and Acceptance of Remonstrance

Another of Qianlong's legitimating strategies was to admit the fallibility of the ruler. This sharply contrasts with Ernest H. Kantorowicz's work on medieval political thought in which he argues that the fallibility of the king needed to be hidden in order to protect his legitimacy. Kantorowicz's distinction between the king's "two bodies" –the body natural and the body politic – does help us understand the kind of image Qianlong was using to portray himself. That is, the king as a fallible figure susceptible to natural fragility and deficiencies is separate from the king as a symbolic ruling force. The body politic consists of the dignity of the royal house. Thus, the king as an individual human being is separate from the king as an impersonal institution. The two bodies are indivisible, but the primacy of the body politic can eliminate the fallibilities of the body natural.¹⁰⁸

A prime example of the division between the two bodies of a Manchu emperor can be found in Jonathan Spence's treatment of the Kangxi Emperor. The difference can be seen in the original version of the emperor's final valedictory edict, in which Kangxi frankly admits his physical ailments and his frustrations as an emperor, and the published version in which these sections were excised. Spence echoes Kantorowicz in pointing out the motive behind the deletions:

From this list of omissions we can see how anxious the drafters of this "final" valedictory edict (we don't know if they were court officials,

¹⁰⁸ Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study of Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 3-8.

K'ang-hsi's son Yung-cheng, Manchu advisers, or confidential secretaries) were to preserve the dignity of imperial image. K'ang-hsi had originally presented himself as a man in pain and a man with doubts; he had also expressed skepticism about the value and honesty of the way (he guessed) he himself would be enshrined in the historical tradition. The 'final' valedictory edict shows how right K'ang-hsi was to be skeptical—he emerges only as a shadow, his platitudes enshrined, and his forcefulness and anger and honesty and pain all-alike-removed.”¹⁰⁹

Qianlong too displayed two bodies in many of his writings. While he emphasized the superior position of and loyalty to the ruler, he also presented the ruler as fallible. The public nature of Qianlong's writings, in contrast to the private nature of Kangxi's own admissions, is also significant. In his writings on remonstrance and political power, Qianlong affirms not only that the ruler depends on his officials for valuable advice and information, but also that the ruler can ruin the empire by succumbing to pride and prejudice by failing to heed his officials.

Qianlong's confidence in acknowledging the authority of his subjects contrasts with his insecurity about the loyalty of his subjects at the beginning of his reign. Despite the confidence found throughout his writings in his youthful *Leshantang quanji*, Qianlong as emperor was clearly motivated to legitimize himself early in his reign. Alexander Woodside argues that Qianlong and his officials made numerous efforts to ensure the loyalty of his subjects by instituting various punishments for violations of filial devotion and ritual propriety and rewarding exemplary behavior. Woodside explains these actions as motivated by a perceived decline in the degree to which the populace adhered to values and their flaunting of government laws.¹¹⁰ He notes several characteristics in the Qing that may have contributed to this phenomenon, especially the

¹⁰⁹ Jonathan Spence, *Emperor of China: Self-Portrait of Kang-hsi* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 175.

¹¹⁰ Alexander Woodside, “The Ch'ien-lung Reign,” in *The Cambridge History of China, Volume 9: The Ch'ing Empire to 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 245-51.

need to generate symbolic loyalty because of increases in population and the expansion of the empire.¹¹¹ As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the *Siku quanshu* project, in particular, was motivated by a need to clarify moral principles because of a perceived decline in social values fostered by the emergence of a vibrant commercial society in much of the empire.¹¹² Qianlong's sponsorship of the *Siku quanshu* project is only the most significant of his literary endeavors. Central to the construction of Qianlong's image as a Confucian emperor were many of his comments on Han Chinese literature.

Manchu Emperor as a Literary Critic of Han Chinese Literature

From the beginning of his reign, Qianlong was eager to demonstrate his abilities as a literary critic. Qianlong contributed to the sphere of literary judgment by authoring his own critiques of some of the most famous Tang and Song poems.¹¹³ Qianlong's literary criticism celebrated the expression of natural feeling over the rigidity of poetic form. In supporting the expression of natural feeling, Qianlong was embracing common sentiments of the literati during his time. Mid-Qing writers and literati believed that the cultivation of aesthetic sensibilities was an alternative way to assert their identities. Narrow-minded requirements of form and content in poetry, these scholars argued, detracted from the effective expression of feeling.¹¹⁴ When Qianlong criticized rigid rules of composition in favor of natural expression, he was cloaking himself in the garb of a mainstream Qing literatus.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 249.

¹¹² Ibid., 285-286.

¹¹³ Michael Chang has described Qianlong's role as literary critic, particularly his valorization of poetry during his southern tours. Chang, *A Court on Horseback*, 265-271.

¹¹⁴ Stephen Roddy, *Literati Identity and its Fictional Representations in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), Chapter 1.

Despite his emphasis on the expression of natural feeling, Qianlong was also careful not to encourage incoherence or literary chaos – he was still determined to channel literature in the service of political goals. Qianlong valued artistry, but he still believed in the relationship between literature and conventional moral concerns. His literary essays belied a dogged adherence to typical didactic goals beneath broad-minded considerations of form and emotional expression.

Qianlong's effort to assert his identity as a literary critic is best seen in his preface to the *Tang Song wenchun*. This preface, which is recorded as being personally written by Qianlong in autumn of 1738, the year the entire anthology was published, has him detailing criteria for evaluating the works that were included in this imperially-sanctioned collection.

The styles of literary text are not unified, and the ways of linguistic expression are many. There are various anthologies that create confusion by saying that those who aim to get at the heart of the sages should return to the words of Confucius and the Duke of Zhou. Yet the Duke of Zhou said that 'Words should have order (*xu* 序)' and Confucius said that 'Words should attain their ends and that is all (*cida eryi* 辞达而已).'¹¹⁵ Without expression one cannot achieve meaning, and if one wishes to articulate meaning with words and yet loses expression, how can one engage in fancy talk and expect to approximate the text of the heavens and the earth? To speak shallowly of righteousness while using fancy language-this was the decline of the eight generations. Their shortcomings can all be attributed to having no order.

Yet one can advance beyond this. Text derives from sufficient words and words derive from sufficient will. If one's will is sparse, how can text adhere to meaning? It is thus that Confucius said that 'Words should have substance (物 *wu*).' It is through expression that meaning is reached, after which there is substance, resulting in the ultimate text under the heavens.

¹¹⁵ I am using Stephen Owen's translation of the phrase. Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 135.

The tone of the passage indicates that Qianlong was attempting to legitimate himself as a literary critic by referring to such authoritative figures as the Duke of Zhou and Confucius. Yet, Qianlong's commentary left room for individual freedom. Instead of dictating that the included texts needed to be composed according to a certain form in order for it to be praiseworthy, he stressed the expression of substance and meaning, which are things shaped by individual authors. This passage contributes to Qianlong's literary authority both by appealing to readers through validating personal style and by supporting this appeal with references to external figures more honored than himself.

After emphasizing the need for inner essence in writing, Qianlong goes on to decry the importance some people pay to external forms:

There are those who say that the style of the ten masters does not reflect the *pian* 駢體 style of the eight dynasties and that their punctuation can be classified as a stylistic gaffe.¹¹⁶ Yet the works of Wei Zhenggong and Lu Xuangong of the Tang show much punctuation. Because their words manage to express their meaning, their writings were worthy of the ages.¹¹⁷ Thus, how can their styles be considered inappropriate? The sun and the moon, in beautifying the Heavens, comprise the text of the Heavens and the hundred valleys; the grass and trees, in beautifying the soil, comprise the text of the Earth. Is there a fixed pattern in the workings of nature? As the workings of nature have no fixed pattern, how can one say that there is a fixed pattern to literary texts? One should instead be concerned with how words establish themselves!”

This passage criticizes those who would disparage worthy writers because of some punctilious attention to stylistic matters. In arguing that the larger goal of

¹¹⁶ Ten masters famous for their descriptive (*fu*) and lyrical (*ci*) poetry. They are Xun Qing, Song Yu, Mei Cheng, Sima Xiangru, Jia Yi, Wang Bao, Ban Gu, Zhang Heng, Yang Xiong, and Wang Yanshou. The *pian* style was noted for its florid parallelism. The eight dynasties are the Eastern Han, Wei, Jin, Song, Qi, Liang, Chen, and Sui.

¹¹⁷ Wei Zhengong refers to Wei Zheng, a minister who served during the reign of Emperor Taizong during the Tang dynasty. Lu Xuangong refers to Lu Zhi, a minister who served during the reign of Emperor Dezong during the Tang dynasty.

¹¹⁷ Wei Zhengong refers to Wei Zheng, a minister who served during the reign of Emperor Taizong during the Tang dynasty. Lu Xuangong refers to Lu Zhi, a minister who served during the reign of Emperor Dezong during the Tang dynasty.

expressing meaning should prevail over adherence to form, Qianlong stresses the importance of varied personal expression.

This emphasis on the importance of flexibility and variation of style is in accord with a point made in the editorial principles (*fanli* 凡例) of the work:

There has never been a fixed law as to the length and cadence of text, but rather what can be called a natural adjustment of the bamboo pipers due to the secrets of the Heavens.

Other comments support the argument for variation and flexibility of literary style. The preface to *Tang Song shichun*, an anthology compiled later in Qianlong's reign, quotes Han Yu: "Brimming energy is appropriate for long and short verses and high and low sounds." The editorial principles of the work mention how "Upon deliberation, the evaluations naturally fell into place, with great variety among the poems, which from the beginning did not rely on the thickness of embellishment for beauty (*zhezong yiding, shengjia ziqi, yanshou huanfei, chu bu yi zhuangshi zhi nongdian we yanchi* 折衷一定，声价自齐，燕瘦环肥，初不以妆饰之浓淡为妍媸)." It is interesting that the phrase "*yanshou huanfei*," which usually refers to variety in female beauty, is used to describe poetry, with the last line possibly using the cosmetics of women as a metaphor for literary embellishment. These comments continue the argument by explaining that prose naturally varies because of factors such as length and sound of recitation – these variations should be allowed to occur without excessive adornment. In other words, without adhering to a particular form, there is more room for personal expression. This must have appealed to literati who were reading these comments in an imperially-commissioned work.

Deemphasizing aesthetic technique echoes the priorities of Song moralists. As Zong-qi Cai explains, Song moralists dismissed attention to literary style as a distraction from the more important goal of moral cultivation. It is particularly interesting that Qianlong should take up this position in light of the shift toward attention to literary style that had begun to be advocated during the Ming and Qing periods.¹¹⁸ In these prefaces, Qianlong expresses literary authority by drawing on both human and natural principles to assert the invalidity of something as rigid as literary form in favor of more abstract principles.

Qianlong's commentaries on several poems in the *Tang Song shichun* display this emphasis on natural feeling over strict adherence to literary form. His commentary on pieces by the famous Tang poet Li Bai¹¹⁹ (李白), reads "Pained feelings at a day's end, with limitless feeling...those who dissect it search for the essence in its form – how can they grasp its expressiveness?"¹²⁰ Qianlong also quotes Ao Ying's commentary: "The described scenes are vast and broad, displaying the force of swallowing and ejecting the landscape. Deep is the melancholy seen in the scattering of these verses (*luoju* 落句)."¹²¹ The use of the phrase "scattered verses" implies a casual effortlessness that was much preferred over adherence to form. Another example is Qianlong's commentary on a poem by Du Fu, another iconic Tang poet, entitled *Three Poems on Happily Reaching the Capital* (*Xida xing zai suo sanshou* 喜达行在所三首): "His feelings flow forth without

¹¹⁸ Zong-qi Cai, *Configurations of Comparative Poetics: Three Perspectives on Western and Chinese Literary Criticism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), Chapter 2.

¹¹⁹ The varied pieces are collectively titled, *Pei zushu Xingbu Shliang Huaye ji Zhongshu Jiasheren zhi youdoingting wushou* 陪族叔刑部侍郎华晔及中书贾舍人至游洞庭五首 (*Five poems Written While Accompanying my Uncle the Vice Minister of the Board of Punishments Li Ye and Secretary Shi Jiazhi on Their Walk at Dongting Lake*).

¹²⁰ TSSC, 115.

¹²¹ TSSC, 116.

decoration,” Qianlong wrote, “Those who discuss Du Fu speak of his not forgetting his ruler for the space of a meal. How much more so in this time and circumstance!”¹²²

Another example would be Du Fu’s *The Eastern Garrison on a Moonlit Night* (*Dongtun yueye* 东屯月夜). Qianlong quotes the comments of Huang Sheng : “In the composition each word describes scenery, each word describes feeling.”¹²³

Comments on several other poems reveal Qianlong’s prioritizing of feeling over form. For instance, he comments on Du Fu’s *Zi Lishui dao ku Wang Yan* (*Crying over Wang Yan at the Li River* 自漂水道哭王炎) by saying “The words are true and the emotion is heavy. Though [the poet] does not seek eloquence, [the poem] spontaneously becomes eloquent (*bu qiu gong er zi gong* 不求工而自工).”¹²⁴ He gives a similar evaluation of Du Fu’s *Two poems on dreaming of Li Bai* (*Meng Li Bai ershou* 梦李白二首): “The sound of deep pain issues from extreme feeling. Once feeling reaches its height literary skill follows (*chentong zhi yin, fayu zhiqing, qing zhi zhi zhe wen yi zhi* 沉疼之音，发于至情，情之至者文亦至).”¹²⁵ A more explicit commentary on the importance of feeling can be found in Qianlong’s evaluation of Du Fu’s *Spring Views* (*Chunwang* 春望): “Sima Guang said ‘The ancients valued the meaning beyond the words, which enables readers to perceive it.’”¹²⁶ There is also a contrast between feeling and form in Qianlong’s evaluation of Bai Juyi’s *A Poem to Lord Sanlangzhong* (*Zeng hou sanliangzhong* 增侯三郎中): “Skilled at using refined language to express rustic

¹²² TSSC, 273.

¹²³ TSSC, 360.

¹²⁴ TSSC, 153.

¹²⁵ TSSC, 193.

¹²⁶ TSSC, 272.

sentiment (*shan yi wenyan dao suqing* 善以文言道俗情。本色语倍雅驯).”¹²⁷

Expression of meaning was something that did not result from deliberate adherence to a certain form, but rather was a byproduct of the natural flow of feeling. The explicit celebration of personal liberation in emotional expression is an interesting stance for someone whose job it was to concern himself with stability and order.

To understand Qianlong’s prioritization of natural feeling over form we need to consider his comments in the context of contemporaneous poetic debates. Karl-Heinz Pohl, in his study of Ye Xie’s “On the Origin of Poetry” (*Yuan shi*), draws our attention to a debate between the individualists who eschewed imitating past models in favor of personal expressing natural feeling and the archaists who were inclined towards relying on such models.¹²⁸ Pohl explains Ye’s assertion that change in poetic form is necessary for orthodox correctness.¹²⁹

Ye’s criticism of adherence to form resembles Qianlong’s position on literary composition. For an emperor, whose task is concerned with maintaining stability, to advance this position means that he did not equate stability (at least at the time he penned these commentaries) with strict adherence to narrow rules. He was able to assert his authority as a literary critic by appealing to the sensibilities of certain literati without undermining his commitment to order.

Qianlong’s emphasis on the importance of natural feeling over form are quite interesting as a contrast to the Qing conservative reaction to earlier trends blamed for social decline and political decay that contributed to the fall of the Ming dynasty. The

¹²⁷ *TSSC*, 534.

¹²⁸ Karl-Heinz Pohl, “Ye Xie’s ‘On the Origin of Poetry’ (*Yuan shi*): A Poetic of the Early Qing.” *T’oung Pao* 78 (1992): 30.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

celebration of natural feeling over form is usually associated with the cult of sentiment (*qing* 情) among the literati during the late Ming, but was a movement heavily criticized in the early Qing. This cult challenged what was perceived to be the dry formalism and rationalism of Cheng-Zhu Neo-Confucian thought by celebrating spontaneity and intuition. Women, who were thought to be superior at poetry because of their sincere expression of emotion and distance from bureaucratic life, gained great esteem in the late Ming.¹³⁰ *Qing* was thought to particularly contribute to female virtue by solidifying loyalty to husbands, fiancées, and lovers.¹³¹ Support for natural emotions, and related movements such as the Wang Yangming school that inspired the cult, fostered considerable opposition in the early Qing. Many intellectuals believed that trends such as the Wang Yangming school exacerbated the moral decline and was a factor in the collapse of the Ming. Novels and dramas were blamed for contributing to moral decline and thus targeted for suppression by local elites.¹³² The practice of *gegu*, a practice by which a child prepared a medicinal soup from a piece his or her own flesh to cure an ailing parent, was considered an especially sincere expression of filiality and intensified during the late Ming. Many of these expressions of emotionality spilled over into the Qing leading local officials as well as the Yongzheng and Qianlong Emperors to try to

¹³⁰ Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth Century China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), Chapter 1.

¹³¹ Katherine Carlitz, "Desire, Danger, and the Body: Stories of Women's Virtue in Late Ming China" in *Engendering China: Women, Culture, and the State* edited by Christina K. Gilmartin, Gail Hershatter, Lisa Rofel, and Tyrene White (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

¹³² Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 3-6. Robert Hegel also highlights elite disdain for illustrated fiction during the Qing, although he argues that this did not stop the genre from flourishing. Robert E. Hegel, *Reading Illustrated Fiction in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), Chapter 1.

forbid such practices.¹³³ The efforts to put an end to these phenomena illustrate imperial anxiety about excessive emotions.

The Qing is often depicted as a period marked by a conservative turn in social mores away from trends like the cult of *qing*. It is therefore quite significant that a Qing emperor concerned with social stability should emphasize natural feeling at the expense of adherence to formal structure. It helped that the stance mirrored that of literati like Ye Xie, who himself reacted to conservative literati by advocating flexibility of form and natural expression. Qianlong's commitment to his stance on literary composition allowed him to assert his authority as a literary critic without being imposing.

Another stance was his notion that emphasizing natural feeling reinforced Confucian bonds and upheld moral order. Qianlong articulated this notion in a section of the *Rizhi huishuo* that warned against indulging in literary activities for their own sake:

When the world is in order, people value honest and steadfast behavior and eschew frivolous superficiality. When the world is in chaos, people aim for empty fame and engage in literary competitions. Thus the trend of literature is tied to the trend of a country. One can perceive the rise and fall of a country by observing the emphasis gentlemen place on aesthetics.¹³⁴ Four years into the Sui dynasty, Wendi decreed that both public and private writings should record facts. This was a positive measure, but it did not last, for literature soon became flashy and lacked substance. The fine trend of the Six Dynasties did not last and the Sui fell. The weakness of the Six Dynasties began with the three emperors of the Wei period and with the elevation of aesthetics that developed with Wang and He of the Jin dynasty. They misled the world by engaging in pure talk (*qingtán* 清谈) and valued [surface] beauty so that the substance of antiquity was gradually lost, frivolous styles became the norm, and decadence appeared. Aesthetics flourished daily and government became daily more disorderly creating a dire situation. Then, in the Tang, Han Yu appeared after eight generations of literary decline and advocated Confucianism thus beginning the return to substance away from flashiness indicating that the world and the hearts of people were in order. Words

¹³³ Janet M. Theiss, "Female Suicide, Subjectivity, and the State in Eighteenth-Century China," *Gender and History* 16:3 (November 2004): 1-25.

¹³⁴ I translate *wen* as aesthetics in this context.

sound out the heart giving shape to what is in it. Is this really that simplistic?”¹³⁵

This echoes Qianlong’s statements made in the *Leshantang quanji* on this role of aesthetics.¹³⁶ Not only did the emperor argue that rigid adherence to a particular form impeded natural expression, but that excessive attention to aesthetics in general disrupted political order and exacerbated decline. The Qianlong Emperor not only championed personal expression of meaning, but by affirming his commitment to political and social order he allayed the fears of those who might have been concerned that he favored dangerous trends.

He also expressed more conflicted sentiments in another passage in the *Rizhi Huishuo*:

When polite learning flourishes, respect dissipates. Yet without polite learning one is unable to express respect. Thus there is the idea of substance and use complementing each other and establishing substance to achieve use. Reaching towards use and going against substance is how the sages distinguished themselves from ordinary people.¹³⁷

Despite his support for natural expression, Qianlong was ultimately quite orthodox in his views on the relationship between literature and feeling – that both should support Confucian norms. Ye Xie’s argument that natural feeling rather than adherence to form contributes to orthodox correctness, which represented the arguments of individualists during the Qing, shows that there were literati who thought along the same lines and thus would have likely agreed with the emperor’s ideas. Qianlong most likely regarded himself as contributing to social order while giving greater rein to literati for personal expression.

¹³⁵ RZHS, SKQSHY, 251-651.

¹³⁶ LST, SKQSHY, 350-251, 257.

¹³⁷ RZHS, SKQSHY, 251-620.

Qianlong expressed his thoughts on the contribution of natural feeling to Confucian bonds in his comments on several poems. His comments on Du Fu's *On Rain* (*Dui yu* 对雨) demonstrate his belief that commitment to Confucian relationships should be reflected in natural feeling rather than in literary artifice: "Sensing the times and worrying about the state of the country, emotions are sparked and come forth. What is not rooted in loyalty and righteousness cannot be forced."¹³⁸ In evaluating Du Fu's *Shangchun wushou* (*Five Poems on Springtime Pains* 伤春五首) he quotes Chou Zhaoao's comment: "Recording the events of the times is intricately bound with expressing pity and originates from the sincerity of loyalty to the ruler and love of the country. It should be circulated together with *Dongfang* (*The Nuptial Chamber* 洞房)." ¹³⁹ On that poem, Qianlong comments, "The tone of *Dongfang* and *The Past* (*Suxi* 宿昔) is clear and deep with the words expressing pity. It is purely the natural flow of the heart of a loyal minister and filial son, riding along prosperity and decline, containing limitless feeling. It is naturally a work of great beauty." He also quotes Liu Huimeng: "The language is not urgent and yet the meaning alone is supreme. With tears of melancholy the feeling is intense."¹⁴⁰ This is similar to how Qianlong explains in the *Leshantang quanji* that the gentleman should, in his studies, avoid impatience and artifice and aim at being natural.¹⁴¹

Yet while Qianlong confirms the importance of natural feeling, he also recognizes that its excess can disrupt propriety. He is clearest about this in his comments on an iconic poem by Bai Juyi entitled *Lasting Sorrow* (*Changhen ge*), which details the

¹³⁸ TSSC, 332.

¹³⁹ TSSC, 337.

¹⁴⁰ TSSC, 378.

¹⁴¹ LST, SKQSHY, 350-627.

relationship between the Xuanzong Emperor of the Tang dynasty and his beloved concubine Yang Guifei. Qianlong notes how Xuanzong's actions "originated with feeling yet could not stop at propriety and righteousness."¹⁴²

Qianlong in these various commentaries clearly argues that the sentiments so important to Confucian social order were to be upheld not so much by strict adherence to form, but by the spontaneous flow of natural feeling, which was to strengthen, not weaken, the bonds necessary for a stable and well-regulated society. The emperor advocated the personal expression of natural feeling and decried flashy composition inimical to the political and social order. He maintained a complex attitude towards the relationship between natural feeling in human relationships and social order. The expression of sentiment had to be free to naturally strengthen social bonds and social order, but the inherent danger was that emotion could be taken to excess and disrupt society. The emperor's arguments regarding the place of feeling in literary composition is an example of deploying soft power by affirming values, whether those concerning literary expression or social order, as defined in the Confucian sense.

Conclusion

Qianlong used the medium of print to demonstrate his embrace of Confucian notions of rulership and notions pertaining to literary composition in an attempt to elicit the support of the Han Chinese literati. He espoused literati ideas on statecraft and literary composition. In his discussions of statecraft, he stressed the importance of acknowledging authority outside the imperial body in order to ensure stability and prosperity. In his discussions of literary form, he stressed the importance of natural

¹⁴² *TSSC*, 463.

feeling in writing and criticized the imposition of rigid forms of expression. While the place of the ruler in the Confucian hierarchy and the importance of structure were never really in doubt, he nevertheless placed great emphasis on discursive to his Han Chinese subjects to create the image of an accommodating emperor. In the literary construction of his own image, Qianlong portrayed himself neither as an imposing despot nor as a hapless ruler subject to the dictates of his advisors. Imperial interests were served by appealing to the values and interests of the Chinese literati under his rule. Firm imperial assertions regarding statecraft and literati composition couched in the terms and ideas of his subjects indicate that Qianlong's approach was both authoritative and conciliatory. This layered approach is an example of the flexibility in governance that characterized the Qing state in the eighteenth century.

Chapter Two

From the Appeal to Interests to the Threat of Punishment: Shifts in the Writings of the Qianlong Emperor

Qianlong's embrace and promotion of the values of his Han Chinese subjects in his early writings was a product of his rigorous boyhood education in the Confucian classics. However, his commitment to values such as imperial tolerance and humility conflicted with hard political realities he encountered soon after ascending the throne. He responded to the perceived faltering in both the loyalty and competence of officials by issuing commentaries that place greater emphasis on loyalty and subservience from subordinates; his own military prowess also began to be used as a legitimating trait. The severity that the emperor displayed soon after the beginning of his reign contrasts sharply with the degree to which he emphasized tolerance in his early writings before he ascended the throne. As Qianlong gained greater experience in responding to political problems and began a massive territorial expansion project in a series of wars in Central Asia and Tibet in the 1740s-1750s, his writings began to exhibit an unforgiving tone. He frequently lectured officials on how they should demonstrate their loyalty and deference to him. As his generals conquered Xinjiang, he began lauding his own military accomplishments.

The social and political atmosphere during the first years of his reign contributed to Qianlong's shifting strategies for representing himself. Disillusionment began early with corruption among the populace as early as the second year of his reign. Political scandals at the court in the 1740s fueled outrage as well. Such scandals shook his faith in the abilities and character of the people around him. His disappointment is a likely reason for his greater emphasis on the hierarchy between ruler and subject, and the duties

owed by the latter to the former, in his writings in the 1740s. Events reported to the emperor concerning the moral decline of the populace and on-going social disorder probably hardened him as well. Finally, the Qianlong Emperor was also concerned about what he regarded as the decline in the military ability of his Manchu soldiers, which resulted in his greater emphasis on military achievement as a trait for political legitimation in the 1740s.

The shift in the emperor's stance towards his readers only further disinclined him to engage in actual dialogue with his audience. Despite Qianlong's use of soft power to convince the Han Chinese elite to accept his rule by acceding to their values, he clearly did not expect actual critical dialogue with them. Both the exalted position of the emperor and a governing ideology that emphasized social hierarchy meant that Qianlong never really expected to engage his audience, but the events of the late 1730s and early 1740s pushed him even further towards adopting a didactic tone towards his subjects.

Disillusionment and Expectations:

Political Scandals and Anti-Manchu Publications

Members of the Han Chinese elite, the group Qianlong had directed his early writings on the importance of Confucian values, began to exhibit behavior that contradicted his expectations of them. This behavior ran the gamut from violations of rules, deception, and even acts that to the emperor had overtones of sedition. Failure to live up to imperial expectations and suspected defiance of Manchu rule by Han Chinese subjects fueled outrage and contributed to the emphasis on proper official behavior in his later writings.

The emperor encountered the limitations of the values he championed in boyhood writings early in his reign. One example is how, in response to an edict meant to aid livelihoods by permitting the private sale of limited amounts of salt below forty *tael*, people began privately selling salt in groups to the extent of seriously affecting government revenues. Qianlong in condemning these individuals declared in his first formal year how they prevented “allowing Us to practice tolerant government (*burong zhen xing kuanda zhi zheng ye* 不容朕行宽大之政也).”¹⁴³ Another example is how a series of corruption scandals led him to state in his second year that the difficulty of a ruler lies in how “exalting magnanimity causes a slipping into laxity (*chongshang kuanda, ze qi feichi zhi jian* 崇尚宽大，则启废弛之渐).”¹⁴⁴

One example of violating a value important to the emperor was the factional conflict between the Chinese statesman Zhang Tingyu and the Manchu official Ortai. Previous scholars have discussed these factional conflicts in more detail, particularly the fall of Zhang in 1745 and Ortai in 1750.¹⁴⁵ Particularly relevant to the argument here is how struggle between two trusted senior officials directly contradicts stern warnings made by both the Qianlong and the Yongzheng emperors about the deleterious effects of factionalism on political order. Qianlong therefore was likely to have regarded the conflict as a failure to heed instructions concerning a threat to political stability. Factional conflict, then, posed a significant challenge to the stability of imperial rule that Qianlong overcame through punitive measures.

¹⁴³ Yan, *Qianlong Leshangtang quanji*, 54.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁵ Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 217; Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 28.

Qianlong's disillusionment only increased with time. In 1748, Qianlong lost his beloved empress Xiaoxian. Qianlong issued a ban on head and face shaving for all males throughout the empire to mourn his empress. To his great shock, Qianlong discovered a large number of people violated the ban by shaving before the mourning period was over. The disillusionment over the failure of his subordinates to mourn the empress probably hardened Qianlong's attitudes towards his officials and subjects.¹⁴⁶

Several other political scandals involved cases of alleged sedition, which indicated that Manchu rule over the Han Chinese was not at all unquestioned. In 1753, a local official from Zhejiang named Lu Lusheng 卢鲁生, using the name of Sun Jiagan 孙嘉淦, authored a memorial critical of Qianlong for certain activities, including the southern tours.¹⁴⁷ The case angered Qianlong because it involved impersonation of a high-ranking official, falsification of official documents, and criticism of major imperial policies. In 1757, Peng Jiabing 彭家屏, the provincial administration commissioner of Jiangsu, discovered and reported that a degree-holder named Duan Changxu 段昌绪 owned a copy of the anti-Manchu writings of Wu Sangui, a Ming dynasty general who eventually defected to the Qing and later rebelled against the Kangxi Emperor in the War of the Three Feudatories (1673-1681). Peng was discovered to have a copy of the unofficial history of the Ming dynasty, a work that Qianlong discovered was being widely circulated.¹⁴⁸ These incidents prompted Qianlong to re-evaluate the Confucian precepts he absorbed during his education.

¹⁴⁶ Norman Kutcher, "The Death of the Xiaoxian Empress: Bureaucratic Betrayals and the Crises of Eighteenth-Century Chinese Rule." *Journal of Asian Studies* 56:3 (August 1997): 708-25.

¹⁴⁷ Bai, *Qianlong zhuan*, 58.

¹⁴⁸ Yan, "*Qianlong Leshangtang quanji*," 57

Recalling and Republication of Leshantang quanji

Once Qianlong began rethinking his ideas on Manchu governance, he decided to republish the *Leshangtang quanji*. It was reissued in the year 1759. Much content spanning the various volumes of the old edition was removed, including essays (*lun* 论), prefaces (*xu* 序) and notes (*ji* 记), postscripts (*ba* 跋) and letters (*shu* 书), miscellaneous writings (*zazhu* 杂著), odes (*biao* 表, *song* 颂), praise essays (*zan* 赞, *zhen* 箴, *ming* 铭), discussions of the classics (*zhiyi* 制义), rhapsodies (*fu* 赋), old-style poetry (*guti shi* 古体诗), and new-style poetry (*xinti shi* 新体诗).¹⁴⁹ The deleted material totals 10 *juan*, shortening the original 40-volume version to 30 volumes. The amount indicates the seriousness with which the Qianlong emperor approached the editing and the value he placed on his literary reputation.

Among the various types of material deleted for different reasons, pertinent to this chapter is the removal of essays from the original version that discuss the importance of tolerance and mildness in ruling the people removed. The deletions of these particular essays represent a shift in the emperor's attitude towards his subjects and moved him further towards autocracy. Essays composed during the emperor's adolescence stressing the importance of tolerance (*kuan* 宽) and humane government (*renzheng* 仁政) were the products of the instilling by his Confucian tutors of ideals quite untested by actual governance. Emphasis on benevolence quickly eroded under the strain of investigating the corruption offenses mentioned earlier that motivated the emperor to express his frustration with the limitations of tolerance as a governing strategy. That he should start doubting the ideals he championed so soon after ascending the throne speaks to Yan's

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 10-17

point concerning the idealism of the early essays. The quick collapse of these formerly emphasized ideals would certainly shock the emperor into targeting the passages discussed in the first chapter containing terms including those such as “tolerance (*kuan* 宽), “humaneness (*ren* 仁), or any relevant words for deletion. Therefore, specific ideas concerning the ideal form of governance formed before his ascension (the original version of the *Leshantang quanji* originated from his boyhood educational training) were challenged early in his reign. Young Qianlong’s boyhood optimism about his ability to win the loyalty of his subjects was dimmed by the reality of imperial politics. Doubts about loyalty of officials led him to stress the importance of the virtues of the officials in governance.

Some of Qianlong’s edicts composed before the abridgement of the *Leshantang quanji* also reflect his growing frustration with his officials. On 5 May 1745, Qianlong issued an edict in which he complained that many officials reported no serious problems in the empire. Qianlong expressed doubt about the veracity of such claims and criticized his officials for being out of touch with the population.¹⁵⁰ As Philip Kuhn has noted, Qianlong demanded of his provincial officials “not just reliability, but zeal: not merely to report accurately on local events, but to go the extra mile to further his royal objectives.”¹⁵¹ It must have been quite galling for Qianlong to realize his officials were not reporting on actual conditions throughout the empire.

Similar frustrations are evident in other edicts Qianlong issued at around the same time. Whereas his edicts in the 1730s speak of his compassion for the people, edicts issued after about 1740 begin to express criticism of “crafty people going after profit”

¹⁵⁰ QLCSYD, Edict 1171.

¹⁵¹ Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, 122

(*jianmin tuli* 奸民圖利)¹⁵² and officials engaging in fraud and bribery.¹⁵³ It was not only the moral values of his officials that were at issue, the moral state of the country also seemed on the decline. Zhu Dingyuan 朱定元 wrote a memorial on the lack of filiality towards elders throughout the empire.¹⁵⁴ On 26 May 1745, Lu Zhuo wrote a memorial suggesting morals had declined to such an extent that the greed of petty subjects (*xiaomin*) outweighed their fear of punishment.¹⁵⁵

However, as important as these earlier incidents were in having Qianlong beginning to doubt the earlier emphasis on benevolence, Yan explains scandals involving Sun Jiagan, Duan Changxu, and Peng Jiabing as direct reasons prompting the revision.¹⁵⁶ Yan explains these specific incidents as particularly threatening to the security of rule by the Manchus and motivating Qianlong to exert ideological control over Chinese subjects. Considering these incidents together with the other scandals discussed here gives a strong sense of how motivated Qianlong was to publicly express shifts in his thoughts on governance by revising the *Leshantang quanji*.

Adding to shifts in emphasis away from the importance of the ruler's benevolence is increase in emphasis on loyalty of subordinates in the commentaries on poetry that he had penned. These commentaries provide a window onto his thinking about loyalty, obedience, and imperial governance. In these commentaries, Qianlong attempted to assert his authority by edifying the audience with his writings. He still attempted to assert his authority by affirming shared values with his Han subjects through the use of

¹⁵² QLCSYD, 381.

¹⁵³ QLCSYD, Edict 1181, dated the 22nd day of the fourth month of the fourth year.

¹⁵⁴ Records of the Grand Council, document 0332002.

¹⁵⁵ Archives of the *Neige xiushu geguan* (*Various Editing Houses of the Grand Secretariat*).

¹⁵⁶ Yan, *Qianlong Leshangtang quanji*, 56

print media, but the shift towards more authoritarian values differs from his earlier strategy of stressing authority external to himself.

Tang Song Shichun

In writings authored both before and during the first few years of his reign, Qianlong argues that the ruler needs to display proper humility in not only listening to remonstrance, but also in acknowledging authority external to himself. Although Qianlong never repudiated these early writings, he began to shift his imperial portrait later in his reign. While he never downplayed the importance of the hierarchical relationship between the ruler and his subjects, his later writings show a noticeable decrease in his emphasis on the importance of the ruler in guaranteeing proper governance and an increase in emphasis on the responsibilities of subordinates.

His *Tang Song shichun* (*Essence of Tang and Song poetry*), published in 1751, is a public expression of the shift. In the *Tang Song shichun*, Qianlong presents his critique of Tang and Song poetry. This was not the first time a Qing emperor had the Imperial Printing Office print volumes of poetry. Several officials during the Kangxi period had begun to print an annotated anthology *Imperially Selected Tang Poems* (*Yuxuan Tangshi* 御选唐诗) during the fifty-first year of his reign.¹⁵⁷ This likely contributed to the reputation for literary patronage that the Kangxi emperor desired. However, the project encountered delays and obstacles. In response to a request to allow an examination student (*jiansheng* 监生) work on the project, Kangxi informed them of the necessity of having scholars with the highest examination degree (*jinsshi* 进士), harshly lambasted

¹⁵⁷ *Qing Neifu*, 17

officials for stupidity, and went so far as to accuse them of poor judgment and deception in word and action (*buji shiyi shifei, qi qianhou yanxing bushi zhi chu* 不计实益是非, 其前后言行不实之处).¹⁵⁸ Conflicts like this surely delayed the process. The emperor himself had delayed on the project as he stated in the fifty-second year of his reign how he was still escaping the summer heat at Rehe 热河 and could not respond to requests to compose a personal preface to the Tang poetry anthology. Noteworthy is the frank admission that he had not written books or engaged in textual learning for a long time (*zhen jiu bu zuoshu, yibu wei zixue wei shi* (朕久不作书, 亦不为字学为事).)¹⁵⁹ This is a particular lapse in commitment to demonstrating literary reputation. Compared to efforts during the Kangxi period, the Qianlong emperor and his officials apparently did not experience similar delays or obstacles. In addition, Qianlong had demonstrated greater vigor in issuing texts to consolidate his literary reputation both through expanding ranges beyond Tang poetry to include that from the Song period in the volume discussed here. This same vigor had prompted him to issue *Leshantang quanji* as gifts to officials¹⁶⁰ in addition to the sale of the work in bookstores.

There is also the issue of authorship, as the preface states that “the editing and commentaries are all due to Liang Shizheng and others (*ququ pingpin jie chu Liang Shizheng deng* 去取评品皆出于梁诗正等),” meaning that Qianlong did not personally author the commentaries. However, he also stated in the preface that he “occasionally browsed them during leisurely moments (*yu jixia yu yi shelie* 於几暇偶一涉猎). This indicates how Qianlong at least read the commentaries and implicitly approved of them

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 23

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 42

¹⁶⁰ *Qing Neifu*, 107, Kahn, *Monarchy*, 169

enough to allow their publication. Imperial agreement with the commentaries, even though separately authored, enables the use of the commentaries to gauge imperial thoughts on governance.

As stated earlier in this chapter, Qianlong's commentaries in the *Tang Song Shichun* reflect a number of anxieties. While commentaries on several of the poems conceded to literati values concerning emotions, many commentaries on other poems that discuss the relationship between ruler and subject manifested a shift in emphasis when compared to his earlier commentaries on Tang and Song prose. Whereas he had earlier stressed the need for conformity on the part of the ruler, he now stressed the need to eliminate and prevent disorder and the responsibilities of subordinates. This greater emphasis on the need for loyalty and order was likely prompted by the various scandals early in his reign and contrasts sharply against the image projected in his princely writings, of the monarch as deferential to the people's will.

One can discern Qianlong's anxieties and wishes in his commentary on Li Bai's *Weeping in Commiseration on the Road* (*Cecelilui* 古风：惻惻泣路岐). Qianlong's commentary describes the sharp contrast between the orderly earlier half and chaotic later half of the reign of the Xuanzong Emperor of the Tang dynasty. He describes how the chancellors Li Linfu and Yang Guozhong 杨国忠 seized power, how villains filled the court, and the virtuous were out in the wild. Qianlong highlights his anxiety about chaos by describing how the state was nearly destroyed during the An Lushan rebellion. Treachery, and the chaos it bred, contrasts sharply with loyalty and its necessity for the survival of the state. He praises Li Bai for remaining loyal to the ruler and also for his concern for the country, which had not diminished at all while in exile (*sui fanglang*

jianghu, er zhongjun youguo zhi xin, weichang shaowang 虽放浪江湖，而忠君忧国之心，未尝少忘。¹⁶¹ Qianlong's commentary suggests he wished that the ministers under him would be similarly loyal.

Qianlong also defined his expectations for subordinates by quoting the commentary by Xiao Shibin 萧士斌, a Yuan-period literatus, on Li Bai's *A Trip North* (*Beishang xing* 北上行). Xiao describes the poem as having been composed after Li Bai attained the ultimate level of moral cultivation and expressed the spirit of loving one's ruler, love for the state, uncomplaining toil, loathing of chaos, and yearning for order (*aijun youguo, lao er buyuan, yanluan sizhi zhi yi* 爱君忧国劳而不怨，厌乱思治之意).¹⁶² This describes the ideal subordinate that must have appealed to Qianlong.

Qianlong's commentaries on other poems constantly emphasize loyalty to the dynasty and the deference of subjects to the monarchy. He praises Li Bai's *Tianjin during March*¹⁶³ for directly satirizing Yang Guozhong, noting the contrast with the equally effective but subtle satire in Du Fu's *A Beauty Walks*.¹⁶⁴ He notes that the disloyal should sweat upon reading Bai Juyi's *Green Stones*.¹⁶⁵ In his commentary on Bai Juyi's *A Critical Memorial*, he not only notes the contrast between Yang Guozhong and Song Jing, a Tang dynasty minister famous for his integrity, he describes the difference as leading to the contrast between the two halves of the reign of Xuanzong.¹⁶⁶ In Qianlong's commentary on Du Fu's *Wangshi zhide erzai Fu zijing Jingguangmen chujian dao gui fengxiang qianyuan chu cong zuoshi qianyi Huazhou yuan yu qin gu bie*

¹⁶¹ *TSSC*, *juan* 1 (15-16).

¹⁶² *TSSC*, *juan* 4 (46).

¹⁶³ *Gufeng: Tianjin san yue shi*

¹⁶⁴ *Liren xing* 丽人行. *TSSC*, *juan* 1.

¹⁶⁵ *Qing shi* 青石. *TSSC*, *juan* 20 (432).

¹⁶⁶ *Xin feng pi bi weng: jie bian gong ye* 新丰折批臂翁：戒变功也. *TSSC*, *juan* 20 (426).

yinchu cimen youbei 往事至德二載甫自京金光門出問道歸鳳翔乾元初從左拾遺移華州掾與親故別因出此門有悲 (*On mourning relatives after just leaving the capital during the second year of the Zhide reign*), he praises the poet for “complaining without anger and showing the way of loyalty and virtue.”¹⁶⁷ Qianlong also quotes the praise of Huang Sheng¹⁶⁸ for Du Fu’s *Five poems on the various generals* (*Zhujiang wushou* 諸將五首) on how it, along with another poem *Feeling* (*Yougan* 有感), contains messages of loyalty to the ruler, repaying the country, ceasing warfare, showing consideration for subjects, pacifying the borders, and quelling chaos.¹⁶⁹

The commentaries on these poems all stress duties of officials to ruler and state. Qianlong’s princely writings praised ministers who were forthcoming with their remonstrance and argue that the state is the ruler’s ultimate responsibility. However, these commentaries put responsibility for the state on the officials under him and praise those who are dutiful and deferential. Qianlong’s emphasis is always on praising loyal ministers and castigating treacherous subjects, particularly the contrast between the stability produced by the former and the disorder caused by the latter. Clearly, Qianlong began to emphasize the survival of the state as relying more on the behavior of subordinates than on virtue of the ruler in the 1740s. This sterner, more didactic stance by Qianlong represents his loss of faith in his officials after their scandalous behavior.

While Qianlong still occasionally remarked on the ruler’s responsibilities and benevolence, his commentaries in the *Tang Song shichun* increasingly praised loyal

¹⁶⁷ TSSC, *juan* 14 (284).

¹⁶⁸ A Qing literatus famous for having composed *Zi Gu* 字詒 and *Yi Fu* 義府, two phonological works.

¹⁶⁹ TSSC, *juan* 17 (372).

subjects and castigated disloyal officials.¹⁷⁰ Qianlong's earlier writings tended to judge rulers and emphasize their responsibility for governance while his later writings shift the judgment and responsibility more towards subordinates. As with the differences between the first and second editions of the *Leshantang quanji*, it is likely that Qianlong's later political experiences exacerbated the concerns expressed in the *Tang Song shichun* given the time of its compilation. Qianlong's frustration with his subjects and concerned about challenges to the Manchu rule prompted him to recall and revise his early writings. The abridgement of the *Leshantang quanji* and the publication of the *Tang Song Shichun* showed unequivocally that Qianlong focused on demanding compliance with Confucian standards of conduct among his Han Chinese. The focus had shifted from a self-representation of a benevolent and responsible ruler to a vigilant and demanding sovereign.

Military Valor as a Chinese Value

Another motif that became conspicuous in Qianlong's writings from the 1740s on was military prowess of the Manchu. Starting in the early 1740s, Qianlong not only consciously projected a sterner image of himself by emphasizing the obligations of officials and subjects, but shortly thereafter also began emphasizing his martial qualities, first in hunting and later in military victories. Although some scholars such as Joanna Waley-Cohen have seen Qianlong's espousal of military achievement in the eighteenth century as a Manchu value, it was also part of his broader strategy to create a sterner,

¹⁷⁰ As discussed in Chapter 1, Qianlong's commentary on Bai Juyi's *Changhen ge* in the *Tang Song shichun* criticized Tang Xuanzong for indulging in sensual pleasures and endangering the state, but these kinds of commentaries are relatively rare in Qianlong's later writings.

more forbidding imperial portrait, but one, I would argue, that continued to celebrate Han Chinese values.

Waley-Cohen argues that the valorization of Qing military success to a large degree posits a dichotomy between Han Chinese emphasis on civil learning and Manchu emphasis on martial valor. She has taken note that Qianlong's commemoration of his military achievements through the use of multiple media, including steles, paintings, and military rituals. Particularly noteworthy is the connection between the commemoration of military achievement and the position of the Manchu rulers in certain cultural spheres. Qianlong commemorated military achievements alongside civil achievements because of his "preoccupation with bolstering and even reinventing the indigenous culture of the ruling Manchus, in large measure to counterbalance the notorious potency of Chinese civilization."¹⁷¹ However, she also describes the sense of competition that Qianlong felt with Chinese civilization by explaining both the dearth of civil accomplishments in Manchu culture and his desire to align the Qing state with native Chinese dynasties as well as Mongol rulers. Apparently, Qianlong meant to present a martial image to both Han Chinese and Manchu audiences.

Waley-Cohen argues that the valorization of Qing military success to a large degree posits a dichotomy between Han Chinese emphasis on civil learning and Manchu emphasis on martial valor. While she does mention Qianlong's desire to surpass Tang rulers in military success and acknowledges Chinese military traditions in referring to the period of the Three Kingdoms and the famous Northern Song dynasty general Yue Fei, she describes the efforts of the Qing rulers to win over the Chinese as largely focusing on

¹⁷¹ Waley-Cohen, "Commemorating War," 872.

achievements in classical studies.¹⁷² This not only implies a dearth of military culture in the Chinese tradition, but also implies a dearth of literary culture in the Manchu tradition.

I argue that Qianlong's methods or modes for revealing his strong interest in fashioning an image of himself as a ruler excelled in military abilities were predominately literary and visual that were rooted in Chinese practices. Equating masculinity with martial skill had long been a common literary idiom.¹⁷³ Fei Zhenxun, the provincial education commissioner of Guangxi, sent Qianlong a memorial in 1790 explaining the importance of the Stone Drum Texts requesting that Qianlong erect another stele in Taiping prefecture.¹⁷⁴ The Stone Drum Texts celebrate the prosperity of the Qin state, which created the first unified empire in China, by describing its rich natural resources, religious ceremonies and prayers for ensuring good harvests, and hunting expeditions. The later verses in the Stone Drum Texts that depict Qin rulers and officials participating in hunting expeditions are particularly significant. Akatsuka Kiyoshi argues that the fact that three of the ten verses are devoted to hunting indicates an equation of military achievement with imperial prestige. As he puts it, "The fact that three of the odes of one festival are about hunting apparently reflects not the religious piety of the people, but rather a tendency of the time that military affairs were emphasized so that national prestige might be exalted."¹⁷⁵ Indeed, the seventh, eighth, and ninth songs all describe the skills of the ruler and his soldiers in a shooting game as well as the grandeur of military formations.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War*, 2-3.

¹⁷³ Mark Edward Lewis, *Sanctioned Violence in Early China* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 43.

¹⁷⁴ QL 55.11.1 (12/6/1790). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0017-02.

¹⁷⁵ Akatsuka Kiyoshi, "A New Study of the Shih-ku Wen: The Ancient Letters Carved in Ten Drum-Type Stones," *Acta Asiatica* 4 (1963), 92.

¹⁷⁶ Entire translations of these texts can be found in Akatsuka, "A New Study," 85-86.

These associations could not have been lost on Qianlong or his officials. They must have realized how publicizing the texts would enhance the Qing emphasis on the importance of military achievement. Imperial approval for the erection of the stele therefore signifies endorsement of Chinese military valor.

There does not appear to have been much effort to instill martial values through printing and circulating any written texts, including the *Record of the Ten Victories* (*Shiquan ji* 十全集), the essay Qianlong wrote to commemorate his military accomplishments. A possible explanation for the lack of circulation of texts related to military endeavors is how the Chinese bureaucrats took the initiative to circulate Qianlong's texts that discussed Confucian virtues. The large number of Han Chinese officials, and assimilated Manchu officials, in the bureaucracy likely contributed to efforts being focused on emphasizing Qianlong's literary abilities and achievements rather than his military accomplishments. Also, Qianlong's view of Han Chinese culture as emphasizing mostly literary values probably meant there was less need to circulate portrayals glorifying Qianlong's military victories to establish political legitimacy among the dominant Han population.

Qianlong's desire to align himself with native dynasties in terms of military achievement, also allows us to consider another aspect of the Stone Drum Texts. The texts neither highlight any achievements of the Manchu rulers nor military achievements per se. Thus, the publication of the texts constituted an attempt to promote martial virtue in general. This contrasts with previous studies of martial virtue as a Manchu trait. Imperial approval of the suggestion to publicize the Stone Drum Texts, in light of the

desire to compete with Han Chinese military achievements, suggests a deliberate strategy on Qianlong's part to appeal to the Chinese in terms of military as well as literary values.

The Reception of the Imperial Image: Qianlong and his Audience

Qianlong's significant efforts to establish his reputation to his readers raises the question of the reception of that image by his audience. While publicly asserting the values of the Han Chinese literati indicates Qianlong valued their opinions, it did not mean that Qianlong actually expected or desired any critical engagement with them on such issues. The emperor's exalted position, and the atmosphere against dissent in the political climate of the eighteenth century, significantly blocks our ability to truly recreate the reception of Qianlong's texts.

It is instructive to compare the political atmosphere in the mid-Qing to that of France in the eighteenth century. Robert Darnton, in his study of illegal French literature, argues that despite the lack of documentation concerning reader reception of the monarchy, indirect hints are still possible by reconstructing a general picture of public opinion. Darnton is able to recreate such public opinion because of the space for political contestation outside the king's court, voiced in various forms and recorded in police reports.¹⁷⁷ Book reviews authored by the Parisian literati and recorded in newsletters have also enabled historians to re-create the reception of forbidden literature.¹⁷⁸

This was not the case in the political atmosphere of the Qing in the eighteenth century when the space for political dissent had shrunk considerably. Compared to oblique criticism of centralized power in the seventeenth century expressed in various

¹⁷⁷ Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1995), 188.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 220.

works, the eighteenth century was marked by a decline in criticism, a much more cautious atmosphere, and stricter controls on dissent.¹⁷⁹ This is certainly not surprising since Qianlong's execution of the political dissident Zeng Jing, who had explicitly expressed his repentance in writing and had been pardoned by Yongzheng, indicates his hypersensitivity to dissent. The public recall of the *Dayi juemi lu* would have alerted the populace to the emperor's attitude towards dissent. These circumstances would have made it impossible for anyone to write anything but praise for the emperor's works.

Mark Elliott acknowledges the lack of space for political dissent when commenting on laudatory prefaces to a collection of poems and essays from Qianlong's youth, noting that

From such hyperbole, we might well conclude that Qianlong was something of a teacher's pet, but these raptures arose from more than simple favoritism towards a gifted student. By the early 1720s, popular wisdom already had it that Qianlong was being groomed for the throne. It would have been foolish for anyone to have written anything other than glowing compliments about his person and his accomplishments. Even at this early date, we can be sure that the imperial image making machine was already at work.¹⁸⁰

This lack of space for anything other than effusive praise during his princehood remained unchanged upon his ascension to the throne. Chapter Three of this study provides evidence that the emperor's works were read by the literati. Given the political atmosphere in the mid-eighteenth century, it is impossible to reconstruct an accurate understanding of what Qianlong's readers actually thought about his works.

¹⁷⁹ Kahn, *Monarchy in the Emperor's Eyes*, 67-70.

¹⁸⁰ Elliott, *The Qianlong Emperor*, 6.

Looking at the particular concept of liturgical roles elaborated by Max Weber can help us understand how the Qing bureaucracy and the elites shared general goals while engaging in their own activities to contribute to those objectives. In describing the role of liturgical associations in contributing to “the liturgical meeting of public needs,” Weber explains how most of them necessarily occupy an intermediate role between dependence on and exposure to the arbitrariness of the state and independence from the state. This middle position is due to the impossibility of the ruler turning “all desired services into liturgies based on collective liability; he was always in need of a *body of officials*.” He ascribes the importance of these officials to the ruler’s need for a “coercive administrative apparatus.”¹⁸¹

What is significant is this middle zone between dependence and independence from the state. As explained in the introduction, the local elite, in their management of social affairs and institutions, still needed official permission for their ventures and official authority to mediate disputes when necessary and this necessitated concessions to certain official demands. A certain degree of reliance on officials was necessary to ensure the functioning of local institutions and the managing of social affairs.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Max Weber. “Types of Authority.” In *Political Leadership: A Source Book*, Barbara Kellerman, ed. (University of Pittsburg, 1986), 1024-25.

¹⁸² Robert Antony and Jane Kate Leonard argue that the Qing government exhibited indirect rule over local society because many responsibilities pertaining to local governance shifted to extra-bureaucratic groups. This is not to say that officials and extra-bureaucratic groups worked independently of each other. They explain that “Local magistrates depended heavily on their material human resources to perform basic governing tasks. This dependence forged a kind of symbiotic relationship between formal bureaucratic and informal non-bureaucratic governance, and it assured a measure of imperial responsiveness to local economic, political, and social realities.” They highlight the important contributions of the local elite to governance and the need for officials to rely on their efforts, stressing the importance of cooperation, and mutual benefit. Ways of interaction included overlapping spheres of activity when working towards common goals in which the local elite provided officials with what they needed, be it manpower or information, or the local elites asking for official permission to start enterprises or official intervention in the case of disputes. Antony and Leonard, “Dragons, Tigers, and Dogs,” 5.

However, this reliance does not preclude a certain distance between different activities of the bureaucracy and the elites. Despite their contribution to shared goals and the exchange of manpower and resources, there does not seem to have been much exchange of ideas concerning social management strategies. Officials and elites did not seek to influence how they performed their respective roles in contributing to shared specific goals despite the necessity of mutual reliance for resources.

The contrast between the sharing of goals and the separation of spheres that characterized the relationship between the bureaucracy and the elite extended to the relationship between Qianlong and his audience. While the emperor and the literati may have shared similar general Confucian values, the common embrace did not preclude literati interpretations differing from their imperial master. Just as sharing general goals concerning the management of society did not prevent officials and elites from deploying their own strategies, the emperor and his audience likely had differing interpretations of the same values. Despite this, when the emperor imposed perspectives in the form of text, literati simply could not contest any imperial perspectives with their own. The relationship was one of imposition, not engagement or dialogue. As in relationships between the bureaucracy and the elite in terms of social management, there was separation between the emperor and the literati in the cultural realm. This separation and the inability of the latter to contest means that the imperial deployment of soft power through written text was less about persuasion and the voluntary elicitation of agreement than Nye's definition supposes.

The Desire for Social Mobility and Imperial Writings

The inability to publicly engage with the emperor's ideas means that we cannot know how the literati regarded imperial writings as intellectual treatises. Despite limitations in gauging any intellectual responses, we can speculate a different kind of reader response to Qianlong's writings if we consider their social interests. It is possible to infer how they regarded imperial writings as tools for entering the power structure if we consider the aspect of social mobility. Two institutions important for advancing both the circulation of the emperor's writings and elite desires for climbing the social ladder were bookstores and the examination system. Chapter three discusses how Qianlong and the bureaucracy stimulated the market for Qianlong's poetic criticism by influencing examination curricula. This alerts us to the idea that knowledge of the emperor's writings was a possible way to enter the existing power structure. One could speculate that there were possibly candidates who attempted to earn extra favor in the examinations by echoing the emperor's ideas in their answers. The greater atmosphere of caution concerning dissent was probably another incentive to echo the thoughts of the emperor.¹⁸³

However, the desire to echo the emperor's thoughts may not have been enough to produce the desired results. In his discussion of academies during the Qing, Alexander Woodside details the difficulties of the state in controlling how students in academies prepared for examinations. He describes the frustrations of literati and officials in discovering that students skimmed the classics and read digests instead of thoroughly absorbing the whole classical curriculum.¹⁸⁴ Woodside attributes these difficulties to the

¹⁸³ Kahn, 1971, 70.

¹⁸⁴ Alexander Woodside, "State, Scholars, and Orthodoxy: The Ch'ing Academies, 1736-1839," in *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, edited by K. C. Liu (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1990).

inability of the Qing state to fund academies. The Qing government therefore was unable to influence an arena as important as the examinations. The eagerness of students to enter the power structure through these examinations, designed to benefit the state by maximizing the recruitment of talent into official service, led instead to haphazard study of the classics. The desire for social mobility and the resulting eagerness to use imperial writings to curry favor similarly does not guarantee that Qianlong's writings were understood in the manner he may have wished.

Conclusion

Qianlong's image soon after he ascended the throne changed from a self-critical, self-demanding ruler of benevolence to a vigilant and severe autocratic monarch. The revision and abridgment of the *Leshantang quanji* and his commentaries in the *Tang Song Shichun* both indicate the shift, which was motivated due to anxieties about security, and the loyalty of his subjects. Qianlong's disillusionment led to his insecurity and a diminished faith in Confucian virtues such as benevolence and civil rule.

His emphasis on the loyalty of subordinates added to the atmosphere against dissent that made it impossible for literati to publicly express their reactions to his ideas. Like the literati that expected the common people to submit to their instruction on rituals, Qianlong most likely expected his audience to simply accept his ideas. However the audience may have interpreted his ideas, they could not seriously influence what he wrote. The most they could do was praise him and use his writings as an aid to pass the examinations. While Qianlong may have been frustrated in his attempts to influence both

the actions of the bureaucracy or the events in local society, neither could his officials, much less the literati, influence his ideas.

Chapter Three

Circulation Routes

and their Significance in the Assertion of Political Legitimacy

In the mid-Qing period, circulation was an important part of the process of using print media to demonstrate Qianlong's political legitimacy. Investigating the distribution of legitimizing images is one way to consider the issue of state intervention. In the following, I outline the various channels through which the Qing bureaucracy sought to circulate certain works authored by the Qianlong Emperor throughout the empire. Qianlong, through his ministers, exploited the vast networks of commercial publishing and bookselling to disseminate his notion of the ideal ruler—of which he, of course, was the presumed embodiment—and the legitimacy of Qing rule as widely as possible. I also examine the variety of non-official social groups involved in the production and circulation of imperial works. Throughout, I highlight the role of extra- or semi-bureaucratic groups and institutions and the way they worked with the formal bureaucracy to illustrate the flexible side of Qing state intervention and demonstrate how the emperor exercised soft power. While the government still regulated private institutions, there was still a certain capacity for individual action given to those associated with such institutions.

The role of the booksellers in the circulation of imperial works remains difficult to determine. There is very little information on the reactions of the booksellers to imperially-authored works so we cannot know whether they were reluctant to sell them, whether they welcomed them, or whether they were able to make lucrative profits from the sale of Qianlong's writings. Most of the information we have about the booksellers and their responses to Qianlong's works comes from the state. What is clear is that the

state regarded the commercial book market as an important non-bureaucratic channel for circulating imperially-authored works that asserted Qianlong's political legitimacy. The Qing state approached the private book market from a variety of angles reflecting different levels of state intervention, which included allocating state resources, allowing booksellers and other publishers the freedom to reprint imperial works, and direct intervention in the case of works deemed improper. These adjustments to the level of state intervention reflected changing relationships between the bureaucracy and the non-bureaucratic local elite.

The Print Industry during the Mid-Qing Period

The growth of the print industry made it a useful political tool in the mid-Qing. Going back to the Tang and Song dynasties, the development of woodblock printing and the desire to gain religious merit through reproducing texts contributed to increases in the printing and circulation of texts.¹⁸⁵ Recent research traces the development of printing to the Tang supporting the arguments that trace the surge in the production of imprints, rather than manuscripts, to the fifteenth century.¹⁸⁶ The population explosion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, increasingly competitive civil service examinations, and the spread of educational institutions all led to an increase in demand for books that helped foster a thriving commercial print industry.¹⁸⁷ Improvements in the technical aspects of woodblock printing and advancements in distribution and circulation systems

¹⁸⁵ Denis Twitchett, *Printing and Publishing in Medieval China* (New York: Frederic C. Beil, 1983), 70, 74-78, 85-86.

¹⁸⁶ Joseph Peter McDermott, *A Social History of the Chinese Book: Books and Literati Culture in Late Imperial China* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2006), Chapter 2.

¹⁸⁷ Cynthia Brokaw, "Introduction," in *Printing and Book Culture*, 10-11.

in the sixteenth century increased both the quantity and variety of printed books.¹⁸⁸ Other factors influencing the development of the late Ming print industry include increased commercialization and urbanization, favorable government policies, and the decline in the production costs of books and paper.¹⁸⁹

In the early Qing, the publishing industry underwent certain changes. In contrast to the late Ming, when commercial publishing was dominated by a handful of cities, publishing in the Qing became increasingly decentralized and a greater number of publishing centers emerged as part of a larger network of commercial publishing.¹⁹⁰ It is clear that the commercial publishing boom that began in the late Ming continued into the early and middle Qing.

The Political Uses of the Print Industry

The Qing state attempted to use the thriving and increasingly decentralized print industry and book market for its own political purposes. Robert Darnton's model of the communications circuit provides a useful way of thinking about the circulation of politically legitimizing texts during the Qing. Darnton delineates the different phases that a book passes through as it is produced and circulated. The agents involved in the communications circuit include the author, printer, shipper, bookseller, and reader.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁸ Lucille Chia, "The Uses of Print in Ming Dynasty China: A Very Brief Survey," in *Books in Numbers: Conference Papers in Celebration of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary of the Harvard-Yenching Library*, edited by Wilt Edema (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 145, 171.

¹⁸⁹ Kai-wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 21-23.

¹⁹⁰ Cynthia Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture: The Sibao Book Trade in the Qing and Republican Periods* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007), 8-10; Lucille Chia, *Printing for Profit: The Commercial Publishers of Jianyang, Fujian, 11th-17th Centuries* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 247.

¹⁹¹ Robert Darnton, "What is the History of Books?" *Daedalus* 111: 3 (Summer 1982), 67.

The model enables us to reflect on the multiple agents involved in the reproduction and circulation of books.

Noticeably absent from Darnton's model, however, is the state. In his study of the circulation of forbidden books in eighteenth-century France, Darnton portrays the state as ineffectual in stemming the distribution of material that it deemed offensive. This chapter demonstrates how the state played a different role in the communication circuit of eighteenth-century China. This occurred without the state having to exert significant control in several situations. The government traversed the realms of the communication circuit in its involvement in multiple stages as they supplemented the efforts of those outside officialdom to circulate politically legitimizing texts.

Previous research emphasizes the use by the Qing government of an institution of their own in the printing and circulation of non-imperially authored works in the early Qing. According to Hu Ming, the Imperial Printing Office produced more than three hundred publications in the early Qing, including works on classical studies, mathematics, astronomy, the arts, literature, epigraphy, and medicine. Hu argues the growing number of government imprints suggests the state was exerting itself to influence academic trends. Works printed by the government and sold publicly included remainders not used by the court as well as editions specifically meant for commercial sale. Local officials, schools, and booksellers were also allowed to re-print copies of works from the Imperial Printing Office. Hu concludes that all of these activities not only helped maximize circulation, but also strengthened state ideological control.¹⁹²

¹⁹² Hu Ming, "Qingdai keben tushu xingtai lun (A discussion on printed books of the Qing period)," *Shehui kexue jikan* (Social science periodical) 16 (1995), 305-310.

This chapter stresses how the Qing government contributed to printing and circulation through the use of non-official institutions in addition to state channels. By outlining how officials and the elite used the commercial book market and other venues to maximize the distribution of imperially-authored works, we gain insight into the subtlety of state efforts to strengthen the legitimacy of the ruling house. State intervention was not only at the origin of the communications circuit, but can be seen in all the channels the state used to distribute its works.

By simultaneously studying the role of the commercial print industry along with other distribution channels, my study offers us a more comprehensive overview of the circulation of imperial images during the early Qing. In his work on the Zeng Jing case, Jonathan Spence devotes considerable space to how Yongzheng defended himself against Zeng Jing's accusations with reference to the state's role in eliminating chaos and ensuring the livelihood of the people. Yongzheng's efforts to present himself as a benevolent ruler are intriguing given his reputation for harshness. Qianlong's own efforts to present an image of himself, and the Manchus, were to reflect a more diffuse character. Whereas Spence argues that the creation and circulation of images reflected the direct injection of imperial power through the distribution of Yongzheng's statements to local officials, who were ordered to circulate the contents to village schools, and to sponsor traveling lectures, I argue that the Qianlong Emperor and the Qing bureaucracy, by exploiting the commercial print industry, were more subtle in the exercise of soft power. Qianlong and his bureaucrats targeting extra-bureaucratic institutions like the printing industry and exploited the market demands of the reading public to influence the imperial image; sales of Qianlong's works also had the corollary effect of helping to defray the

many costs incurred by the Imperial Printing Office. While Qianlong was known to also use government channels to intervene in literati activities, Qianlong's soft power approach to the print industry makes the circulation of his image more multi-directional than Yongzheng's top-down approach.¹⁹³

Timothy Brook has explored how the diffuse nature of woodblock printing and the blurred boundary between the commercial and official print industries thwarted censorship efforts during the *Siku quanshu* project.¹⁹⁴ Brook is correct to point out the blurred boundaries between the public and private print industries, but I would argue that Qianlong realized the power of the commercial press earlier. Qianlong's initial use of the commercial print industry, in contrast to the *Siku quanshu* project, was also more positive in that he believed it could help him accomplish his goals. This awareness would motivate Qianlong to continue using the commercial press to circulate legitimizing portraits of himself despite the frustrations it would ultimately produce.

For the Qing state, the commercial print industry served as both a non-official channel to reproduce officially-authored works and an extra-bureaucratic channel for circulating them. This perspective on the print industry expands upon Lucille Chia's use of the term "commercial" as seen in her study of the Jianyang bookshops. Chia uses the term "commercial" to define those works not printed by official or religious

¹⁹³ There is a memorial submitted by Chun Tai, an Academician Reader in Waiting on the fifteenth day of the second month of the sixth year (31 March 1741) thanking Qianlong for bestowing the *Sishu Wenxuan* to aid in the drafting of laws and the spreading of education (Grand Council Archives, Document#1146023). Charles Hucker, *A Dictionary of Official Titles in Late Imperial China* (Taipei: SMC Publishing Inc., 1985), entry 5326, 430. Another memorial submitted on the twelve month of the fourth year (around 1740) by a number of officials (1146020) requested copies of books such as *Leshantang quanji* and *Rihuishuo* also to aid in education. A reference from the *Fujian tongzhi* records how imperially-authored books were bestowed to academies during the Yongzheng and Qianlong reigns *Fujian Tongzhi (Fujian Province Gazetteer)*. Reprinted during the tenth year of the Guangxu period. Huawen Shuju (*juan* 62, 1268).

¹⁹⁴ Brook, 2005, pp. 125-136

organizations.¹⁹⁵ Therefore, Chia is intimately concerned with distinguishing between different producers of texts, specifically focusing on those producers who meant to sell their imprints on the open market. By contrast, this chapter focuses on the commercial print industry both as a reproducer of texts and as a separate mode of circulation that functioned together with other channels.

The use of both bureaucratic and extra-bureaucratic channels to circulate legitimizing images of the Qianlong Emperor, and the variety of people involved in this process, demonstrates a large degree of flexibility in the Qing state and its ability to adjust its degree of social intervention in the circulation of imperial works. This supplements previous studies of the Qing state, discussed in the introduction, that focus on the state's autocratic tendencies and the local elite's ability to negotiate and resist state power. The Qing state's deployment of a range of tools in the exercise of soft power enables us to revise the image of the Qing state as despotic, hindered by bureaucratic inertia, or restricted in its attempts to demonstrate its legitimacy.

The Importance of Reproduction by Commercial Publishers

The Qing state did not restrict the circulation of imperially-authored works as much as the Ming state. Scarlett Jang analyzes the role that the eunuch agency known as the Directorate of Ceremonial played in circulating imperially-authored publications in the Ming. She highlights the attempts of Ming rulers to assert influence using the print medium such as Taizu and Empress Ma writing edifying texts meant for members of the imperial family, as well as texts justifying Yongle's usurpation. Particularly noteworthy

¹⁹⁵ Chia, *Printing for Profit*, 7. Kai-wing Chow attributes the porosity of the boundary between commercial and private publishing to the nature of woodblock printing. Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 62.

is Jang's description of the government's efforts to regulate the circulation of imperially authored publications. While the government ordered the circulation of morality books published by the inner court to public schools for use in instruction, it also prohibited private and commercial publishers to freely print imperially authored works at will. These orders did not seriously affect the commercial circulation of such works.¹⁹⁶ The Qing state, in the eighteenth century, by contrast, regarded the sale of imperially authored texts as contributing to, not threatening, the authority of the ruler. Whereas Ming emperors had regarded the commercial sale of their publications as having the potential to destabilize authority, Qianlong took quite the opposite stance regarding the buying of his works as helpful in reinforcing his authority.

Commercial publishing was important in helping to maximize circulation of imperial works by expanding accessibility to them. The Manchu emperors like Qianlong were skillful in employing commercial publishing to expand publications commissioned by imperial fiats.

From the beginning of his reign, the Qianlong Emperor sought to utilize the commercial print industry to maximize the circulation of imperial works. In an edict written on the 27th day of the fourth month of his first year, he wrote:

How can the ancient books that my imperial father issued throughout the world not be widely circulated? Let the governors, provincial administration commissioners (*fanfu*), and various officials throughout the provinces pay special attention to recruiting booksellers to facilitate the circulation and sale of printed materials. They are to forbid clerks from engaging in obstruction and extortion. This will enable sellers to delight in printing and make it easy for scholars to purchase works, to the extent

¹⁹⁶ Scarlett Jang, "The Eunuch Agency Directorate of Ceremonial and the Ming Imperial Publishing Enterprise," in *Culture, Courtiers, and Competition: The Ming Court (1368-1644)*, edited by David Robinson (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 176-178.

that works will be circulated and recited among households. This will be sufficient to ensure wide circulation.¹⁹⁷

This edict indicates that Qianlong, from the beginning of his reign, knew that the print industry was indispensable to enhancing the reputation of rulers. This channel would maximize the exposure of people to the positive portrayals necessary for affirming the legacy of his ancestors as well as his own rule. The expansion of the circulation of writings was crucial for contributing to Han Chinese acceptance of Manchu governance.

Qianlong issued an edict clearly attesting to his strong interest in making books commissioned by his father Yongzheng widely available to the Chinese literati:

Previously an edict of Emperor Shizong was carried out whereby the imperially carved classics, histories, and various books of Emperor Shengzu were issued to the provincial administration commissioners (*buzhengshi*) of each province. They were to be respectfully carved and printing was permitted. Shops were allowed to print and sell them in the hope that every scholar would study and recite them so as to widen instruction. I have recently heard that the blocks are stored in local schools, with few copies being printed by literati and by shops. Have the governors and provincial administration commissioners (*fanfu*) of all provinces take care to heavily repair them so as to make it easy for literati to print them. As for those who wish to carve blocks, let them do as they wish, for there is no need to forbid them from doing so. If among the various imperially authored works there are those that are suitable for scholars to study and recite but that have not been issued, let the governors (*dufu*) memorialize that the carved blocks be issued and circulated. As for the blocks stored in the Imperial Printing Office, the Hanlin Academy, and the Imperial Academy (*Guozijian*), we can have people print from them. Also, the various books previously stored in the Imperial Household Department (*Neiwufu*), if there are Manchu and Han officials who wish to buy, read, and recite them, then the printing should be allowed. As for how it should be carried out, let the Ministry of Rites request an edict to be circulated and, after deliberation, set the number of tael for the needed paper and ink. As for all Manchu and Han officials who wish to buy and recite them, have them draw up and submit a petition outside the various yamen and prepare to pay out of their own pockets, and allow all of the printing. As for those willing to donate a certain amount of their salary, have the relevant yamen check the records and notify the yamen of the Imperial Printing Office and have them issue the tallied number of books and notify the Board of Revenue to deduct from salaries in order to defray costs. Also, have the various types of books

¹⁹⁷ *QLSYD*, edict 160. The same statement can also be found in *QGZSL*, *juan* 17, 448.

stored in the Imperial Printing Office sent to the supervisors to be stored in publishing houses (*shuju*) and allow scholars to buy them.¹⁹⁸

This edict indicates that the emperor was aware that, in order for any work deemed important to circulate to the widest extent possible, it was necessary for copies to circulate through the commercial book market without being funded by government resources. Therefore, the government needed to provide resources such as blocks, copies, and funding for producing a small number of standard editions to be reprinted by commercial publishers.

Officials also recognized the importance of the commercial press in circulating the imperial image. In a memorial, the Commissioner of the Office of Transmission requested that booksellers be enlisted to circulate works authored by Kangxi and Yongzheng:

The blocks are respectfully stored in the Ministry of Rites and your subjects have been especially permitted to print them. However, the manuscripts [to be printed] are great in number and those who are available to print them are few. I fear as times passes the blocks will rot and books will not circulate. Your minister requests to respectfully follow the example of imperial edicts having the Four Classics widely circulated and order the Ministry of Rites to hire purveyors to print and sell them and to strictly prevent clerks from obstruction and extortion. I also request that Your Majesty follow the precedent of the *Peiwen Yunfu* (*Dictionary of Rhymes*) and order the governors and provincial administration commissioners of all provinces to utilize public funds and send officials to the ministries to print several hundred copies to be given to all provincial, prefectural, and county schools. The rest can be given to booksellers to distribute. They may be allowed to carve blocks as well.¹⁹⁹

Both the emperor and the high officials recognized the importance of booksellers in increasing production and widening the scope of circulation of imperial publications.

¹⁹⁸ QGZSL, *juan* 70, 130.

¹⁹⁹ QL 1.5.20 (6/28/1736). GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0002-011.

The emperor and the bureaucracy acted upon their awareness of the importance of commercial publishing by endeavoring to have copies of various titles printed by the Imperial Printing Office, known as *dianben* 殿本, circulated throughout the book market. Channels through which these editions entered the market included academies, direct purchase from bookshops operated by the Office, and bestowal from the emperor. Both local officials and private booksellers were permitted to reprint the editions as well. The intended scope of circulation even reached overseas to Japan, where Chinese merchants brought editions from the Office, indicating the vigor of the efforts of the government to influence the commercial book market.²⁰⁰

Publication requires funds and the imperial government could not defray the entire cost for printing large number of copies of books commissioned by the Manchu emperors. The strategy of producing and circulating legitimizing texts necessitated the mobilization of resources of local government offices and the enticement of commercial publishers in reprinting imperial editions.

Local officials were incumbent in making imperial imprints widely available without incurring enormous cost in printing editions that might not sell. They were anxious in enlisting local publishers to reprint imperial imprints at their own expenses. The provincial administration commissioner of Jiangxi, Diao Chengzu 刁承祖, explained how he collaborated with booksellers in the printing of copies of Emperor Kangxi's *Yuzuan Zhouyi zezhong* (*Imperially Authored Deliberations on the Zhouyi*) The copies were to be sold at accessible prices, with the charging of excessive interest to be

²⁰⁰ Kai-wing Chow, "The Book Market and the National Publishing Industry: Circulation of Editions of the Imperial Printing Office in Japan (*Shuji shichang yu guojia chubanye: Dianbanshu zai Riben de liutong*), presented at the International Academic Conference on Court Texts and Cultural Exchange in East Asia (*Gongting dianji yu dongya wenhua jiaoliu guoji xueshu yantaohui*), The Palace Museum, Beijing, July 2013, p. 8

forbidden, just when candidates for the grace examinations at the provincial level were gathering in the cities fighting over the chance to be the first to buy books.²⁰¹ Officials sought to make books available at affordable prices, which was a necessary condition for the accessibility of imperial writings.²⁰²

Officials, while still actively contributing to the printing and circulation of imperial works, were mostly concerned with ensuring that resources were available and that sub-bureaucratic clerks did not interfere with the activities of the booksellers. While the imperial works available at bookstores and government offices may have originated with the initiative of the bureaucracy, the government placed few restrictions of how booksellers were to go about selling them. From the lack of instruction on what specific printing methods or particular circulation routes to take, booksellers were free to adopt whatever methods or routes they deemed most effective. The actual printing and circulation of imperially-authored works was left in the hands of bookshops and literati. Officials were to facilitate circulation through having works issued or conducting commercial transactions.²⁰³

²⁰¹ QL 1.8.22 (9/26/1736). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0002-017.

²⁰² Cynthia Brokaw discusses how “At the same time, the population growth served to keep labor costs down so that the expense of book production did not rise with the greater demand. These two factors—an increase in demand coupled with stable or lower labor costs, help to explain the striking expansion of the publishing trade from the late Ming through the Qing.” Brokaw, “Introduction,” 11.

²⁰³ There is an instance in which the *Hanlin shidu xueshi* (Hanlin Academy Reader-in-waiting) ordered ten copies each of *Shengzuren Huangdi yuzhi wenji* (Imperially Authored Essays of Emperor Shengzuren), *Shizongxian huangdi zhupi shangyu* (Imperially Rescripted Edicts of Emperor Shizong), and *Yuzhi leshantang ji* (Imperially Authored Work on the Delight in Doing Good) be sent to government schools (*guanxue*). *Qing Gaozong shilu* (*Veritable Records of the Gaozong period of the Qing Dynasty*) Zhonghua Shuju, 1985), *juan* 50, 858. A memorial by Feng Ling 馮鈴, the governor of Anhui, mentions an edict to issue anthologies of imperially composed poetry to county schools and academies. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0006-001. However, there is also other evidence that the bureaucracy acted in a commercial capacity. A memorial by Fang Shijuan, the governor of Guizhou, mentions a hundred copies of *Yuzhi Shiren Ji* (*An Imperially Edited Anthology of Poets*) being printed and stored in government offices where they could be purchased by booksellers and scholars. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0006-011.

There were at least four different editions of the *Essence of Tang and Song Poetry* (*Tang Song Shichun*) that were printed by commercial or private publishers. These extant copies of non-government editions bear evidence to the fact that there were commercial and private publishers who did respond to the state's call for assistance in making the emperor's anthology available to the reading public (see Appendix). .

There is also additional evidence of Qianlong's works being intended for circulation. Governor-General of Liangjiang Qing Fu in a memorial cites imperial permission granted to booksellers who wished to print copies of *Leshantang quanji* and *Rizhi huishuo* in addition to reporting his having sent copies to academies.²⁰⁴ In 1739, the Governor of Shanxi Jueluo Shilin 覺羅石麟 listed the *Rizhi huishuo* and *Leshantang quanji* as among the works suitable for scholarly study and recitation – the blocks for these two works should be circulated widely.²⁰⁵ The Provincial Administration Commissioner Huang Shulin reported that several previously printed books had been heavily edited and issued to booksellers to facilitate printing by literati and that the Kangxi Emperor's *Yuzuan zhouyi zezhong* 御纂周易折中 (*Imperially Authored Deliberations on the Zhouyi*) had not been printed yet but should be printed. The Governor of Shandong Fa Min in a memorial where he cited Huang's report, recommended the printing of *Yuzhi Leshantang quanji* and *Rizhi huishuo*, which, he praised, contained “statements on standards of imperial conduct that constitute a hugely successfully moral work that is truly sufficient to awaken the age and enlighten the people.” He requested that two copies of the two works, along with the Kangxi's *Yuzuan zhouyi zezhong*, be sent to him to facilitate their printing. He requested that not only

²⁰⁴ QL. 2.10.7 (11/28/1737). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0002-025.

²⁰⁵ QL 4.2.6 (3/15/1739). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0002-032.

should copies be stored in schools (*xuegong* 學宮), but that the blocks should also be sent to booksellers to enable literati to print them so that “they can be widely circulated to spread the favor of education.”²⁰⁶

In addition to these two important works, other works written by Qianlong were also to be circulated commercially. Governor-General of Huguang Sun Jiagan expressed concerns about poor scholars having difficulty purchasing the *Tang Song wenchun* (*Essence of Tang and Song Prose*) and discussed cutting costs to facilitate its wide circulation.²⁰⁷ This indicates that government efforts were made to facilitate the sale of *Tang Song wenchun*.

According to Governor of Jiangsu Chen Hongmou, Qianlong, in an effort to stimulate civil learning, ordered that candidates taking the provincial and metropolitan examinations be required to compose poetry. Chen recommended that copies of Qianlong’s *Tang Song shichun* (*Essence of Tang and Song Poetry*) be reprinted and circulated so that all scholars could possess a copy.²⁰⁸ One wonders whether the move to increase circulation of imperially authored poetry was motivated by Qianlong’s revision of examination criteria pertaining to poetry. If there is a connection, then the creation of a market for Qianlong’s originated from the state. This would be a particularly indirect way of seeding the imperial influence in the cultural area, as the manipulation of phenomena such as the market and public institutions like the examination system is more subtle compared to directly mandating the reading of imperial works.

Qianlong appeared to entertain an optimistic view of the quality and popularity of his poetry. He believed less government interference would help his writings to circulate

²⁰⁶ QL 4.2.12 (3/21/1739). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0002-033.

²⁰⁷ QL 7.9.26 (10/24/1742). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0003-21.

²⁰⁸ QL 25.3.22 (5/7/1760). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0004-023.

among the Chinese literati. In an edict issued on 26 July 1738 (QL 3.6.10), he orders officials to “comply with the booksellers in the printing and selling of original works for scholars to recite and learn in order to spread teachings” as well as saying, “As for those who wish to print, abide by them and do not forbid foolishly.”²⁰⁹ Qianlong sought to limit official regulation of the printing industry and to work with the system to circulate the imperial image through commercial sale. His decision to order officials not to overly restrict the activities of booksellers constituted an attempt to restrict the role of the state in directing how the booksellers were to circulate texts. Interestingly, his edicts indicate the necessity of hard or political power for removing bureaucratic obstacles to the use of soft power for influencing those beyond official circles. This is similar to the notion of “smart power” that Joseph Nye and Richard Lee Armitage define as a skillful combination of hard and soft power necessary for ensuring the extension of influence.²¹⁰

Qianlong’s imperial status was likely a selling point. Tanni Toshihiro argues that literati printed works mainly as a way to gain social prestige. Particularly relevant to this chapter is Tanni’s explanation of the likelihood that official acclaim helped sell the work of certain authors. Prefaces or other acclaim by officials was likely to have boosted the sale of a work.²¹¹ This echoes Kai-wing Chow’s application of Gerard Gernet’s concept of paratext, which refers to the trappings of a book that contribute to determining the reader’s interpretation.²¹² Chow applies Gernet’s concept to his study of the authorship and commercial sale of literati writings during the late Ming by explaining how

²⁰⁹ *QLCSYD*, edict 885.

²¹⁰ Joseph Nye and Richard Armitage, *CSIS Commission on Smart Power: A Smarter, More Secure America* (The Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007).

²¹¹ Tanni Toshihiro, “Shin kenryuu chou ni miru shuppan no kenisei” (Authority of publishing during the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty), *Jinbun ronso* : *Mie Daigaku Jinbun Gakubu Bunka Gakka kenkyuu kiyou* (The Humanities Journal of Mie University) 22 (2005), 10-11.

²¹² Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 153.

publishers used prefaces by famous authors to boost the sale of books.²¹³ One can infer that officials, booksellers and anyone else who printed and circulated texts were bound to perceive a work by an author such as the emperor himself as an opportunity gain profit or prestige.

Copies of Qianlong's works indeed made it into bookstores. Acting Governor of Guangdong Wang Mo 王謩 reported that the *Yuzhi Leshantang quanji* and *Rizhi huishuo* had already been carved by booksellers. He also discovered copies that contained mistaken characters and requested an original copy for comparison.²¹⁴ In discussing the progress of replacing the old edition of *Leshantang quanji* with the new one, Governor of Zhejiang Zhuang You reported finding a bookstore in the city of Jiaxing that specialized in selling copies of imperially authored eight-legged essays, the carving blocks having been made by an already deceased holder of the *juren* degree.²¹⁵ In his response to the memorial, Qianlong stated that it was sufficient to collect copies and not the blocks. Zhuang, in another memorial, mentions that copies of this anthology were marked full of notes, making their collection and presentation disrespectful. He talks of reprinting the anthology and allowing the cancellation of inspection and collection activities.²¹⁶

Another work that made it into bookstores was the first edition of *Leshantang quanji*. Zhuang, in the same memorial also describes how everyone studying for the examinations in schools located in villages and outlying areas vied to buy a copy, with the short length of the work and the low price facilitating circulation. He noted the

²¹³ Ibid., 109-110.

²¹⁴ QL 26.3.17 (4/21/1761). GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0002-031.

²¹⁵ GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0004-044.

²¹⁶ QL 26.1.19 (2/23/1761). GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0005-010.

difficulty in recalling all the copies of the first edition of *Leshantang quanji* because they were reprinted in large number and sold in low prices.

The existence of the marked copies suggests that there were non-official editions of an imperial work other than the high-quality copies produced by the Imperial Printing Office,²¹⁷ for it is unlikely that readers would have marked expensive versions. Cheap editions facilitated the aim of the government in increasing accessibility through lowering costs. This facilitation was necessary given the prices of the editions produced by the Imperial Printing Office despite state measures such as using bamboo paper.²¹⁸ Examples of prices include a set of the *Rizhi huishuo* printed on bamboo and priced at .1669 tael²¹⁹ and a dual set of the *Leshantang quanji dingben* printed on bamboo costing .7630 tael.²²⁰ The existence of different editions of imperial works attests to the good response of commercial publishers to some of these government imprints and to their large number in circulation. The various commercial editions are evidence of wide circulation.

The degree to which the Qing state valued the commercial circulation of imperial works can be seen in the amount of aid that was given to supplement distribution. Educational Commissioner of Beijing Zhao Dajing 趙大鯨 explains that compared to scholars in the eastern and southern provinces, there were scholars in the north who had not even seen certain imperial works because the cost of paper and production (*gongben*) were too high. Zhao is quoted as explaining when he was educational commissioner of Jiangxi, printing a copy of *Sijing xingli* (*Human nature and principle as explained in the*

²¹⁷ Several scholars point out how the Imperial Printing Office was particularly known for the quality of the works it produced. Brokaw, "Introduction," 18; Evelyn Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A History of Qing Social Institutions* (University of California Press, 2001), 179; Preston Torbert, *The Ch'ing Imperial Household Department* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1977), 39.

²¹⁸ Chow, "Market," 7

²¹⁹ Ibid., 6

²²⁰ Ibid., 7

four classics) only cost one tael, six *qian*, and three *fen*, but that in Zhili, it cost seven taels, one *qian*, eight *fen*, and six *li*. Although this was cheaper than the prices of the *Guozijian*, it was still over four times more expensive than that of Jiangxi. He realized after taking office that using “nourishing honesty” money (a supplement of official salaries meant to curb corruption) to print and issue works would not be as good as poor scholars buying them, since it would not do to compel people to read them by issuing commands. He recommended that a thousand taels be taken from the Zhili treasury to be sent to the governor and provincial administration commissioner of Jiangxi for printing these works and then have them sent to Zhili for storage. Zhao explains that he frequently sold copies to students and that funds were returned to the treasury. Although he states that this strategy did not have to be continued, he indicates that this method enabled families to own the books and people to study them. Gao seconded Zhao’s strategy and communicated with the governor of Jiangxi, whose report Gao quotes as confirming the feasibility of a similar plan.²²¹

Acting Provincial Administration Commissioner of Shaanxi Hui Zhong described how difficult it was for scholars in outlying areas to buy books. It was difficult for booksellers to print and that it would be easy to use officially carved printing blocks. It was a pity that it was previously thought that there would be no buyers and that books did not circulate. Hui responded to an edict, hiring booksellers from near and far to print. He also stated that he allowed the sale of the books and strictly forbade both officials and clerks from raising pretexts to obstruct or extort a single *wen* from the booksellers. Sellers were able to print without unnecessary expenses – all they needed was the price of paper and ink. All books that would be profitable should be sold cheaply so that even the

²²¹ Gao’s memorial is dated QL 9.6.19 (7/28/1744). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0003-027.

“mean people” could buy them. Issuing the texts to all provinces, prefectures, and counties would enable them to spread far and wide so that ambitious scholars previously without books would have access to them and eventually imperially-authored books could be found throughout the empire.²²² These strategies meant to enhance the circulation of imperial works indicate that the bureaucracy was more concerned with removing obstacles to circulation, and making necessary resources available, than with supervising and regulating printing and publishing. Officials were meant to aid in the distribution of political texts, not dominate it.

Compared to how the bureaucracy went about initiating and facilitating the circulation of his works, the Qianlong Emperor does not seem to have been very involved in contributing to circulation. His distance from the circulation process contrasts with the energy he put towards authoring his texts. Not only can this be seen in the rather perfunctory brevity of many of his comments on relevant memorials, but also in how at times plans stated in memorials were based on recommendations made by officials. The contribution of the bureaucracy to the circulation of imperial works, while more limited than the contributions of other members of society, was much larger than that of Qianlong in promoting circulation. Different sides during the various stages of the deployment of soft power, whether in composition or circulation, exhibited different levels of involvement.

²²² QL 10.2.23 (3/25/1745). *GZDA*, *WJL*, document 04-01-32-0003-031.

Other Channels

Although the emperor and the bureaucracy supported the circulation of imperial texts through the print industry they were aware of the limitations of this channel. Therefore, government officials also used other channels to supplement the mobilization of the print industry in order to maximize distribution. This gives us a sense of the variety of strategies used in the deployment of soft power, which underscores the importance of appealing to the values of the Han Chinese literati.

Brokaw's study of the Sibao book trade highlights an important phenomenon concerning commercial printing during the Qing: "the geographical extension of commercial woodblock printing concerns to rural hinterland and frontier regions hitherto untouched by commercial book culture; and the related social penetration of texts to lower-status levels of the population in these regions."²²³ Brokaw explains how factors such as the limited skill required to carve woodblocks, and their portability, along with population increases and expanded migration patterns all contributed to this broad distribution:

In sum, the expansion in geographical scope, the growth in number of publishing and bookselling sites, and the greater complexity of intra- and interregional links among these sites that characterize the Qing book trade, coupled with the increased prosperity and expanding population of the eighteenth-century, made possible not only a broader but also a deeper dissemination of texts, socially as well as geographically. Many of the new publishing sites, like Sibao, served both the larger book market and a smaller, rural demand for relatively inexpensive texts. The expansion of bookselling networks made possible the distribution of printed texts to even quite isolated peasant communities, to members of the lower rungs of the social order heretofore largely excluded from printed book culture. It was in the context of these trends that the Sibao book industry unfolded."²²⁴

²²³ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, 7-8.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

The factors that Brokaw includes in her explanation undeniably contributed to the greater geographical extension of the dissemination of commercial texts, which must have aided in maximizing the reach of imperial works.

A number of memorials reveal that the geographical reach of commercial texts, while having expanded to a great degree during the Qing period, did not satisfy the goals of officials who endeavored to circulate politically legitimizing texts. Officials complained that certain areas had few bookstores or booksellers. Thus, in order to maximize the spread of imperial texts, other channels were also used to supplement the commercial book market.

Schools were considered an important institution for circulating imperial works. Provincial Commander-in-Chief of Fengtian Chen Zhizi 陳治滋 quotes another memorial requesting that schools be given one copy each of the *Leshantang quanji* and the *Rizhi huishuo*.²²⁵ The targeting of schools in efforts to circulate imperial portrayals should come as no surprise given how Yongzheng's public rebuttal of Zeng Jing was circulated in schools.

A memorial written by Governor of Henan Yin Huiyi 尹會一 demonstrates the variety of strategies used to circulate imperial works. He quotes a report by the provincial administration commissioner:

In Henan province, scholars near the cities and villages have formed societies, each with a society leader, monthly evaluations, and lectures. As for current funding, eight kinds of books are all printed at the production cost of seven taels. There are hardly any provinces or counties which, aside from "nourishing honesty" money, have any public funds for use in local public affairs.²²⁶

²²⁵ QL 8.11.4 (12/19/1743). GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0181-015.

²²⁶ QL 4.1.20. GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0002-030.

Yin then quotes the commissioner's argument that public funds should be sent to the province to print and distribute works to the societies for scholars to read. He also explained how prices should be circulated. He went on to explain that if there are members of wealthy families who want to print by themselves or donate funds to enable poor scholars to study, then regardless of the number of copies, and without having to travel far, local officials should report to the provincial administration commissioner and advance the funds for printing, to be paid back by local officials. In this way, with frequent reporting and printing, circulation can still reach even remote mountains and outlying corners and places where booksellers cannot reach.

A memorial by Assistant Censor (*zuofudu yushi*) Liu Wulong further illustrates the coexistence of various strategies to distribute Qianlong's works. He explained that the provincial administration commissioners of each province carved imperially edited classics and allowed people to print and sell them to widen circulation and inspire people. Although Jiangsu is a place where booksellers gather and even though it is easier to buy books compared to other provinces, there were many students who had never seen imperially edited classics. After discussions with the governor and provincial administration commissioner, two copies of each book were distributed to academies and four copies distributed elsewhere to enable scholars to read them, with the same plan to be implemented again once public funds were somewhat enriched.

Liu discovered that there was school-owned land (*xuetian*) donated by previous officials to help supplement student stipends and with yearly rental incomes of about five thousand taels going to the treasuries to help manage Confucian schools (*xuegong*), pay for ritual sacrifices, and aid the poor. While it was originally discussed that surplus

profits of four to five hundred taels would go towards official departments to enrich military salaries, Liu suggested that it should go towards aiding poor students. After normal expenses have been covered, surplus profits should go towards printing imperially edited classics for distributing to those among the top scorers in the examinations (*suike*) who have ambition but no financial ability. Liu concluded that any surplus profit after the printing should go towards poor students in academies.²²⁷

Academies also depended heavily on the book market to acquire works. An example of this is in a memorial by Yin Huiyi. While the memorial is mainly about checking the Imperial Printing Office for books that should be but were not yet issued, including imperially authored editions of *The Filiality Classic*, and asking the emperor to issue such works, Yin mentions how he sent people to Jiangsu to buy classics and histories to be shipped back to Henan for storage in academies and Confucian schools.²²⁸

These memorials demonstrate that commercial booksellers were not the sole means to circulate imperial works. Rather, they were supplemented by other institutions and state-initiated practices, which compensated for the limitations of commercial transactions. Thus, while the bureaucracy had only a limited role, it could still participate in certain activities to supplement those of non-official members of society when needed in order to maximize circulation.

Changing Editions

The state tended to intervene to a greater degree when faced with certain problems regarding book circulation. One such problem concerned recalling copies of

²²⁷ QL 4.10.6. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0002-038.

²²⁸ QL 4.3.18. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0002-035.

the first edition of *Leshantang quanji* in order to issue copies of a revised edition featuring deletions of material considered harmful to the political legitimacy of Qianlong and the Qing rulers. These included florid praise of the emperor's tutors that might detract from Qianlong's own ability, negative portrayals of foreign peoples, and tracts on the importance of benevolent government that were deleted because of changes in the emperor's thoughts on rulership.²²⁹ Recalling copies of the old edition proved to be a considerable task. Two years after their initial recall, Qianlong was still complaining that few copies were returned and attributed the problem to laxity among his officials.²³⁰ In addition to bureaucratic problems, the breadth with which the old edition circulated was another major obstacle to its recall.

A memorial by Ye Cunren 葉存仁 illustrates the wide circulation of the *Leshantang quanji*. In addition to instructions on the printing of the revised edition of the *Leshantang wenji dingben* by governor-generals and governors, Ye also quotes instructions regarding the submission of the original editions to officials and the reception of copies of the new edition that were to be circulated to all academies, charitable schools, gentry families, and bookstores. Ye explains that scholars in Guangxi were insufficiently informed. A remedy was to issue copies to academies, with storage to be overseen by education officials (*jiaoguan* 教官), as well as permitting academies, charitable schools, and gentry to print copies themselves. Ye also mentions ordering his subordinates to strictly forbid clerks from seizing pretexts to cause disturbances while collecting copies.²³¹

²²⁹ Yan, "Qianlong *Leshangtang*," 28-29, 30-32, 43.

²³⁰ *QGZSL*, *juan* 628, 6-7.

²³¹ QL 25.2.12 (3/28/1760). *GZDA*, *WJL*, document 04-01-32-0004-016.

Similar procedures for replacing editions are echoed in a memorial by Governor-General of Liangguang Li Shiyao bearing the same date as the above-mentioned. After discussing the reprinting process, Li suggests future instructions to carve and print the editions, to order local officials to circulate detailed instructions, to order any scholar families who possess copies of the original edition to hand them over for new ones, and to prevent clerks from causing disturbances or engaging in extortion.²³² The instructions requesting voluntary submission as well as instructions to officials to prevent offenses by clerks likely supplemented efforts to make copies of the new edition available.

Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Ai Bida 愛必達 and Governor of Yunnan Liu Zao 劉藻 discuss the handing of an imperially bestowed copy to the provincial administration commissioner of Yunnan and using public funds to print copies. They also discuss the official Qing Fu sending copies from Jianan and the official Zhang Yun printing copies and distributing them to academies in the provincial capitals.²³³ The fact that this memorial bears the same date as the above two memorials reveals the pace of activity involved in this adjustment of imperial images, indicating the level of concern exhibited by the state in its relatively modest yet active role.

Governor-General of Zhejiang and Fujian Yang Tingzhang 楊廷璋 mentions instructions to booksellers engaged in reprinting as well as anyone else engaged in printing and adding commentaries to hand over the printing blocks for official consideration and that they will receive copies of the new edition for circulation. Yang explains that procedures would be carried out appropriately without the need to rely on

²³² QL 25.2.12 (3/28/1760). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0004-017.

²³³ QL 25.2.12 (3/28/1760). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0004-018.

clerks for inspection and collection that could lead to disturbances, and how gentry and booksellers would become active and happily accept copies of the new edition.²³⁴

Officials and booksellers had simultaneously contributed to printing. Ai Bida 愛必達 and Governor of Guizhou Zhou Renji 周人驥 quote a report by the Provincial Administration Commissioner Xu Tan 徐坦 stating that copies could not be printed in Guizhou because of the rough craftsmanship of Guizhou carvers. Tan proposed using public funds to print copies in Shanghai, have the blocks shipped to Guizhou, and then assemble them and print copies for distribution. Ai and Zhou also mention that earlier in Qianlong's reign permission was granted to scholars and booksellers to go to Jiangsu to print copies to be sold to scholars in Guizhou.²³⁵ Governor of Jiangsu Xiong Xuepeng 熊學鵬 explains that earlier in Qianlong's reign permission was granted to scholars and booksellers to go to Suzhou to print copies of the first edition. People were sent there to print and ship copies back to Zhejiang for distribution. He reports that public funds were used to print copies of anthologies of imperially composed poetry to be distributed in Zhejiang. He argues that permission should be granted to scholars and booksellers who to wish print copies.²³⁶

Governor-General of Henan Wu Dashan 吳達善 mentions the possibility that official instructions may not have reached the entire province because of communication problems. He explains his plans to order the education officials to circulate instructions to turn in copies of the old edition in exchange for new ones. As for booksellers aiming

²³⁴ GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0004-020

²³⁵ GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0005-001

²³⁶ QL 31.6.6 (7/12/1766). GZDA, WJL, document 04-01-32-0006-008.

to make a profit, they are not willing to store copies of the old edition. Copies of the new edition are easier to sell,²³⁷ which would be another reason to exchange the two copies

The goal of instructing people to exchange copies of the two editions is shown in other memorials. Governor-General of Huguang Su Chang 蘇昌 explained the need for inspection. He stated that if one were only to order local officials to collect the old editions, then personal involvement would not be possible and the directive would be meaningless. Su explained that education officials were on close terms with the gentry so he should order local officials to circulate instructions to gentry and booksellers together with education officials.²³⁸ Similarly, Governor of Shanxi E Bi 鄂弼 expressed his concern that having local officials carry out inspections and other activities would give clerks a chance to interfere. He mentions orders to educational officials to go to places where scholars gather during the examination period to circulate instructions. He also mentions printing copies of the new editions and sending them to Shao Shuben while ordering him to inform scholars of examination activities of counties during his inspection.²³⁹ The bureaucracy took seriously its relatively modest role in the circulation of politically legitimizing works, but also recognized the importance of cooperation with members of the local elite such as the gentry to facilitate such circulation.

A larger role for officials was necessary in some provinces. Governor-General of Sichuan Kai Tai 開泰 explains that since Sichuan is an outlying area, all books circulating among the people are from Zhejiang booksellers. Since the territory of Sichuan is vast and the population scattered it will be difficult for the people to hand in

²³⁷ Dated the second month of the twenty-sixth year (March/April 1761). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0004-030.

²³⁸ Dated the twenty-second day of the second month of the twenty-sixth year. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0004-033.

²³⁹ *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0005-008.

old copies. Kai mentions a copy of the new edition being printed and issued to every province and prefecture. Local officials were ordered to carefully issuing instructions to the population, who only needed to report to local officials. The role of local officials was clearly more important in outlying areas.²⁴⁰

These memorials show that while the bureaucracy left a good deal of the work of printing and circulating imperial works to booksellers and the gentry, they were still quite active in facilitating these tasks such as providing financial and other resources. There was one arena, however, in which the state felt forced to take a more proactive approach in making sure that improper editions of important works were removed from circulation.

Policing Editions

A number of memorials discussed the issue of improperly abridged editions of the classics circulating in bookstores. The governor of Hunan mentions orders to officials and scholars who have bought such works to voluntarily destroy them. He explained the importance of reading the classics in their entirety and criticizes the practice of using abridged editions. He mentions that bookstores were selling these works. Examination candidates are mentioned as is talk of inspecting bookstores as well as composing examination questions targeting the classics.²⁴¹ Governor of Shanxi Jueluo Changlin and Governor of Zhejiang Fu Song quote the same memorial in discussing related issues.²⁴²

These issues reflect a number of points. Firstly, they show that the state was not only concerned with consolidating the imperial image, but also with actually preserving the quality of classical learning. This shows that there was more to cultural activities

²⁴⁰ QL 26.3.9. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0004-036.

²⁴¹ QL 57.9.28. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-019-010.

²⁴² See 04-01-32-019-015 and 35 for the memorials of Jueluo and Fu, respectively.

than presenting imperial portraits. The Qing state combated what they perceived as threats to classical learning that the examination system was supposed to uphold. Benjamin Elman argues that the Qing state showed greater concern over political threats rather than heterodoxy resulting in public leeway for intellectual diversity.²⁴³ The concern over abridged versions of the classics means that the public leeway for intellectual diversity was limited. The state could still intervene in a forceful manner over issues it deemed crucial, even issues not directly related to sedition.

Economic Benefits

Intervention in the commercial print industry also had the added advantage of helping to defray costs. Several scholars have pointed out the economic aspect of this intervention. Xiang Si's article lists various costs associated with producing texts in the Imperial Printing Office. Weng Lianxi's article points out how the government not only needed authority in its printing endeavors, but also a huge budget.²⁴⁴ Both Weng and Hu Ming point out the intervention of the Qing state in commercial bookselling explaining that they sold printed material to merchants.²⁴⁵ The printing manual by Jin Jian documents that the Imperial Printing Office "used cheap bamboo paper to print [books] and making known set prices for distribution,"²⁴⁶ as well as on how money from selling books was submitted as soon as it was received.

²⁴³ Benjamin Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, 2nd edition (Los Angeles: University of California at Los Angeles Press, 2001), Preface.

²⁴⁴ Weng Lianxi, "Qing neifu Wuyingdian kanke banhua (Printed illustrations from the Qing Imperial Printing Office)," *Shoucangjia* (Collectors) 12 (August 2001), 37-38.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 40; Hu, "Qingdai keben tushu xingtai lun," 118.

²⁴⁶ *Wuyingdian Juzhenban Chengshi*, 284-570, 571.

Thus supplementing funds in this way contrasts with increasing public funds through the harsher method of imposing legal authority. An example of the latter strategy is depicted in a memorial submitted by the Governor of Guangdong Su Chang on 28 December 1751 suggesting that public funds be supplemented by confiscating the property of merchants who have run afoul of the law.²⁴⁷ Joseph Nye in conceptualizing the notion of soft power downplays economic aspects arguing that a government committed to shared values to exert influence is different from using carrots and sticks. However, it is likely that there were economic benefits to the use of soft and smart power to consolidate the imperial image during the Qianlong period. These economic benefits would have made such strategies all the more attractive.

Conclusion

In the case of printing and publishing in the Qing, people could print, publish, and circulate texts. While certain provinces were famous for producing many books, no area established a monopoly on either the printing or the circulation processes. Timothy Brook, through comparison with the English licensing system of the 1500s, explains that while booksellers' guilds existed in eighteenth-century China no single guild was able to exert influence beyond any individual province. Nor was the central government able to set up a booksellers' guild that could regulate the circulation of commercial print from any one location.²⁴⁸ The rise of provincial booksellers in eighteenth-century England changed the relationship between London and the provinces concerning the printing and circulation of print media from one of largely domination into a more symbiotic one.

²⁴⁷ *Gongzhongdang Qianlongchao zouzhe*, volume 1, 889.

²⁴⁸ Brook, 2005, 135.

There was even less of such a dynamic in the Chinese case. Without regulation of the print industry by national guilds, there was a certain degree of freedom to publish, which likely widened the range with which print was able to circulate thereby facilitating the exposure of the public to Qianlong's works.

The Qing state also seems less controlling of the commercial print industry in comparison to eighteenth-century England. John Feather argues that a lapse in the Printing Act led to the legalization of provincial printing, which contributed to the proliferation of newspapers in the provinces. Many people who published newspapers eventually entered the bookselling trade. While London publishers eventually regained their monopoly on printing and publishing by protecting copyrights and distribution, the flourishing of provincial bookstores had reached the point where it was mutually beneficial for London publishers and those booksellers to enter an interdependent relationship of supply and circulation.²⁴⁹

Although the Qing state was capable at intervening in some fashion the circulation of texts they deemed important, Qianlong and his officials granted a greater measure of liberty to booksellers and gentry to engage in their own activities to print imperial works, which demonstrates that much of the work of reproduction and circulation was left to commercial and private publishers. This shows the emperor resorted to non-bureaucratic channels and resources to produce and distribute texts designed to project positive images of the emperor; however, this did not mean a hands-off approach, as the state still intervened to facilitate reproduction and circulation. The state engaged in similar activities of its own, including printing and selling imperial

²⁴⁹ John Feather, *The Provincial Book Trade in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1-10, 68.

works, as well as providing financial aid and other resources. These activities added to those of social groups outside the bureaucracy to maximize the breadth of circulation of Qianlong's works. In this context, the state was a facilitator rather than as an all-powerful director. Of course, there were times when the state felt compelled to take a more forceful role to resolve issues it deemed important, as reflected in the attempt to control abridged classics circulating in bookstores. The complexity of the relationship between the emperor and the bureaucracy forces us to consider more nuanced characterizations when discussing the issue of exerting official influence.

Chapter Four

Methods of Collection and their Significance for Political Legitimacy

Collection of texts as well as circulation of imperially authored writings was important for producing and circulating positive images of the Qing state. The same channels and social groups involved in the distribution of legitimizing texts of the Qing emperors were also involved in the collection of books for the imperial bibliographic project, the *The Complete Collection of the Four Treasures (Siku quanshu)*. The *Siku quanshu* project was a monumental effort designed to showcase the emperor's patronage of civil learning.²⁵⁰ The initiative taken by officials and their enlistment of the active aid of the elite were important for locating books, screening taboo or seditious contents, and evaluating the quality of the works collected. Like other aspects of the project to strengthen the political legitimacy of the Qianlong emperor, the process by which books were located and evaluated also indicates how power was spread out between the emperor, the bureaucracy, and elites, as different actors demonstrated different levels of initiative depending on the specific aspect of the process

As discussed earlier in this study, printed texts were an important medium for appealing to the values of the Han Chinese literati. The Qianlong emperor relied on print to demonstrate his esteem for the learning they so cherished. The role of print in legitimation involved not only issuing imperially authored works demonstrating his mastery of Confucian statecraft and literary skill, but also collecting a variety of printed texts to showcase the emperor's esteem for the polite learning of the literati and the literary achievements of his reign. The process used to collect printed texts, like the

²⁵⁰ Kent Guy explains how the project was meant as an affirmation of the importance of scholarship and as a statement of the achievements of Qianlong's reign. Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 34-38.

distribution of imperially authored works, enables us to understand how bureaucratic initiative contributed to exercising soft power.

This chapter studies the role of the bureaucracy in advancing the book collection process, which increased the distance between the emperor and his officials. This imperial relationship with the bureaucracy had already begun to become distant during Qianlong's reign. Beatrice Bartlett explains that the Grand Council eventually took on a significant amount of the initiative that maintained government operations due to the increasing number of functions and amount of paperwork assigned to it. This resulted in Qianlong's relationship with the Grand Council becoming distant, even though he was still able to override any action they took. A similar distance between the emperor and his officials, not just those on the Grand Council, facilitated the collection of books for the Siku Quanshu project. The suggestions put forth by officials to advance the campaign and the brevity of Qianlong's responses indicate how proactive the bureaucracy could be to advance state interests, and how much leeway the emperor could afford them to do so. Bureaucratic capacity for independent action and ability to mobilize social groups to advance the process of book collection deepens our understanding of the relationship between different parts of state and society, and how they worked together to fulfill common goals. This chapter demonstrates the significance of the complicity between the state and the elites for the legitimization of Manchu rule through by shedding more light on the mobilization of non-official social groups to maximize acquisitions, thus substantiating points of earlier studies concerning the importance of appealing to the interests of such groups.

Power Balance between the Actors Involved in Collection

The Qianlong emperor in the winter of 1772 initiated the bibliographic project that expressed both affinity for the literary sensibilities of his subjects and intolerance of dissent, thus attracting and intimidating those he ruled. The sheer number and variety of individuals he involved in the collection and evaluation of texts, including not only local and provincial officials, but also private collectors urged to submit works and famous literary and court figures who served on the over 700-member staff, as well as the twenty-two years spent on the project,²⁵¹ attests to the determination of the emperor to showcase the literary achievements of his reign.

In some respects, the emperor succeeded in this attempt to glorify his reign. The final product included an annotated catalog of 10,680 extant titles and a compendium where 3,593 titles were recopied.²⁵² However, any legitimating effect the project may have had on imperial authority was severely marred by how it served as a literary inquisition in the later 1770s and 1780s, when the number of titles destroyed allegedly reached 2,400, with the number of titles officially revised totaling about four to five hundred.

The bibliographic project is important for our understanding of governance in eighteenth-century China because it serves as a criterion for measuring the ability of the emperor and his bureaucracy to advance official agendas. A related question is what the project indicates about the relationship between the emperor, the bureaucracy, and the elites. As this chapter is concerned with these different relationships as they relate to buttressing imperial authority through collecting texts, a brief review of earlier studies on

²⁵¹ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 1.

²⁵² Ibid.

ensorship and the relevant interactions between different actors is necessary for contextualization.

One issue is whether the project is more of an indication of state imposition or that of limitations in advancing official agendas. The *Siku Quanshu* project as a censorship campaign was certain more vigorous and effective when compared to earlier campaigns. Explanations for the failure of censorship from the Song to the Qing periods include the indifference of rulers²⁵³ as well as political and economic crises leading to the fall of the Ming dynasty.²⁵⁴ The former explanation is difficult to document and prove, while the latter explanation does not explain the failure of censorship during the middle of the Ming period. A more common explanation is that of an excessive, uncontrollable desire of readers for prohibited information that apparently was too large for the government during the Song dynasty to control.²⁵⁵ This suggests that the commercial

²⁵³ Chen Zhenghong and Tan Beifang argue that the Wuzong Emperor's lackadaisical rule allowed the spread of Wang Yangming thought. Chen Zhenghong and Tan Beifang, *Zhongguo jinshu jianshi* (A simple history of forbidden books in China) (Shanghai wenhua chubanshe, 1992), 154.

²⁵⁴ Chen and Tan also argue that political and economic crises allowed Li Zhi's works, denounced by many for iconoclastic criticism of the Confucian family system, to begin re-circulating soon after their ban and the chaos accompanying the fall of the Ming explains the failure of the government to ban the novel *The Water Margin*, which was regarded as having the potential to incite rebellion. Ibid., pp. 160-161.

²⁵⁵ Hok-lam Chan explains how the orders of the Song government prohibiting the printing and sale of documents state affairs and secrets were ineffective "largely because of the public clamour for information on state affairs" (6). In addition, although the Song government also forbade the circulation of private news sheets outlining similar information, they "were generally ignored under the great demand for information, and they enjoyed increased popularity especially in the Southern Sung (7)." As for those who sold such information, Chan highlights the sale of documents on border defense and state secrets to the Liao, explaining that "the prohibition order did not deter people from smuggling books into the Liao because it had become a lucrative operation" (14). Also, "because the Chin rulers offered high prices, private traders were also tempted to smuggle printed materials across the border, as under the Liao" (15). A similar explanation is given for the failure to "arrest the proliferation of privately published examination literature because of the excessive demand, especially during the Southern Sung, with the rapid increase of candidates participating in examinations" (9). Hok-lam Chan, *Control of Publishing in China, Past and Present* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1983). This is reminiscent of Lucille Chia's description of the inability of the Song court to stop the circulation of such literature (Chia, 2002, pp. 120-126). Denis Twitchell emphasizes a large demand of readers for forbidden works and the resulting large scale publication of such works in medieval China. Denis Twitchell, *Printing and Publishing in Medieval China* (New York: Frederic C. Beil, 1983), 60.

nature of the book trade and the demand that it created had a large part to do with ineffectiveness of censorship during the Song.

Censorship during the Ming period was no less effective. The Ming government clearly wanted to censor material they deemed undesirable. The Ming court had censored historical records.²⁵⁶ Ming state censorship such as a collection of erotic tales known as *New Tales while Trimming the Wick* and the works of Li Zhi 李贄, a philosopher criticized for ideas deemed inimical to the Confucian social order.²⁵⁷ These attempts to eliminate undesirable materials at first may seem to support the view that the Ming state was an autocratic one.²⁵⁸ Yet censorship during the Ming period was, contrary to what one might expect, surprisingly ineffective. Printed material of various genres official deemed undesirable continued to proliferate despite government prohibitions.²⁵⁹ The

²⁵⁶ Hucker explains: "When the *San-ch'ao Yao-tien* was in preparation, it was ordered, at Chia Chi-ch'un's urging, that all private publications relating to the court controversies be confiscated by the provincial authorities and that henceforth no such books might be published without government approval. After the new work's publication, at the urging of the supervising secretary Yu T'ing-pi, it was ordered that all privately published lists of Tung-lin men, whether friendly or antagonistic, be prohibited, confiscated, and burned, so that the *San-ch'ao Yao-tien* could stand as the sole standard of historical judgment about the Tung-lin Party and the officialdom might cease to bicker any longer about partisanship." Hucker also gives another example on p. 217 that involves the *Guangzong Shilu*: "Late in 1626 the censor-in-chief Liu T'ing-yuan objected to delays in completing the revision, as his predecessor Tsou Yuan-piao had objected to delays in preparing the original. Moreover, he reported that the surveillance vice commissioner of Kwangsi province, Ts'ao Hsueh-ch'uan, had privately complied and printed his own version of the history of Kuang-tsung's reign. The emperor ordered that Ts'ao be dismissed from the civil service and that his work and its printing blocks be destroyed." Charles Hucker, *The Censorial System of Ming China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 217.

²⁵⁷ Brook, 2004, pp. 118-125.

²⁵⁸ Hucker's descriptions of how both emperors Xizong and Shenzong arbitrarily punished officials who spoke out against imperial excess seems to confirm the impulsiveness of imperial power during the middle to late Ming period. Hucker, *The Censorial System*, Chapters 5-6.

²⁵⁹ Kai-Wing Chow in his analysis of examination aids of the Ming period and their proliferation explains how "the commentaries themselves testify to the possibility of disparate interpretations, hence undermining the authority of the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy endorsed by the imperial government (Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power*, 166)." In addition to undermining official intellectual authority, he also explains how some commentaries could offer interpretations that were critical of the Wanli emperor's rule, undermining his political legitimacy as well, emphasizing how quotes from classical texts were reinterpreted so that the meaning shifted from explaining abstract principles of moral development to how rulers should specifically manage the wealth of the country and, by extension, how the Wanli emperor was not doing so properly, (pp. 182-188). In addition to commentaries to classical works and examination aids, the circulation of subversive literature of other genres was also widespread. Tian Yuan Tan (Chen Tianyuan) explains that

examination system during the Ming also proved ineffective in curbing the expression of heterodox ideas.²⁶⁰ The Qing state in the eighteenth century was certainly more vigorous in their censorship.

The efforts of the Qing state to censor undesirable material has led to several scholars pointing to the literary inquisition of the Qianlong period an example of Qing authoritarianism. They explain the literary inquisition of the Qianlong period as a movement imposed by the state upon the populace. Several studies document the brutality and harshness of the Qing state in rooting out material irrationally deemed seditious.²⁶¹ Sugimura Yuzo's biography of Qianlong describes the *Siku quanshu* project as being motivated by a desire to root out anti-Manchu writings. Although he illustrates state efforts to target such material as reflected in book lists, he also explains that many books escaped destruction for reasons such as the efforts of surreptitious literati and

texts of Ming-period plays containing onstage portrayals of emperors (*jiatou zaju*) continued to circulate despite the ban forbidding them in 1411 (p. 85), with the roles of emperors simply given alternative labels or left unchanged altogether (pp. 90-95). Tian Tan Yuan, "Prohibition of Jiatou Zaju in the Ming Dynasty and the Portrayal of the Emperor on Stage," *Ming Studies* 49 (2004), 82-111. As for Li Zhi's works, the philosopher Gu Yanwu describes how literati were delighted with his works and how they kept copies despite the order forbidding their circulation. Gu Yanwu, *Rizhiliu jishi* (Record of daily knowledge), edited by Huang Rucheng, reprint: Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1962), 440.

²⁶⁰ A Ming-period official named Feng Qi complained of the inability to eradicate prohibited books. Sun Chengze, *Chunming meng yu lu* (Record of Springtime) in *Siku quanshu zhenben liu*, (Taipei: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1976), Vol. 230. He placed the duty of burning prohibited books on local officials (Gu, p. 434, Sun, 3b), blaming them for the failure to do so despite repeated instructions and accusing them of equating the classics to useless things (Sun, 3a). Feng Qi identified the examination system as a tool to stamp out unorthodox thought (Sun 3b). He suggested to the Wanli emperor specific measures in ensuring that only orthodox examination answers would make it past graders: "Shengyuan who use one quote from Buddhist classics should have their stipends stopped for one month. In addition, compensation should be forbidden. Those who use more than three quotes should be demoted. Passing answers containing one quote from Buddhist classics should be barred from participating in the next round of examinations and should be prohibited from participating in the examinations for the highest degree (*huishi*). Repeat offenders should be expelled (Gu, p. 434)." From the phrase "Things have been slightly better since then", it would appear that these measures were actually decreed. However, their ineffectiveness is indicated by the next sentence: "However, the old pollution still deeply embedded and cannot be completely washed away (Gu, p. 435)." Feng Qi describes the sympathy of those in power: "Those in positions of power (*zai wei zhi ren*) regard it as a deed of hidden virtue to take pity on and protect examination candidates and thus do not report them (Gu, p. 435)."

²⁶¹ An and Zhang, *Zhongguo jinshu daguan*; Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition*, 5.

looser enforcement of censorship policies in the south.²⁶² Sugimira thus also portrays the *Siku quanshu* project as an example of state imposition. Okamoto Sae also highlights the role of the state in carrying out the campaign. In addition to also pointing out Manchu fears concerning the circulation of seditious material, Okamoto focuses specifically on the number and variety of books destroyed and the effects of the literary inquisition on intellectual development as a partial explanation for the Qing state's inability to resist Western imperialism.²⁶³ Timothy Brook argues that official enforcement of the literary inquisition were motivated largely by penal measures and also describes the inquisition as a failure due to the lack of supervising institutions like a nationwide booksellers' guild. This lack necessitated the reliance on an ineffective bureaucracy unable to handle how woodblock printing contributed to diffuse book circulation.²⁶⁴ While Brook's emphasis on obstacles to the goals of the inquisition contrast with the emphasis of the other studies on the destruction wrought by the state, he still characterizes it as something that the state attempted to enforce and impose onto the populace.

Kent Guy's study of the *Siku Quanshu* project challenges the picture of the book-collecting process as being imposed onto the populace. According to him, censorship efforts "had grown, in large measure, because bureaucrats, expectant officials, and literati had been able to further their own interests through the pursuit of imperial goals; when this opportunity ceased to exist, the campaign declined as well."²⁶⁵ He demonstrates that, far from simply being cowed into surrendering books, scholars welcomed the project as

²⁶² Sugimira Yuzo, *Kenryuu Koutei* (The Qianlong Emperor) (Tokyo: Nigensha, 1961), 79, 92.

²⁶³ Okamoto Sae explains this in the introduction to her study of the literary inquisition. Okamoto Sae, *Shindai kinsho no kenkyu* (On forbidden books in the Qing dynasty) (Tokyo: Daigaku Shuppankai, 1996).

²⁶⁴ Timothy Brook, "Censorship in Eighteenth-Century China: A View from the Book Trade," *The Canadian Journal of History* 23: 2 (August 1988), 193-94.

²⁶⁵ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 196.

an opportunity to advance intellectual agendas.²⁶⁶ In terms of censorship, Guy highlights how shifting the burden of book collection from educational officials to those wanting such an appointment greatly advanced the inquisition through increasing the number of books that came in and enlarging the geographical range of the search.²⁶⁷ Thus, he supplements Goodrich's point concerning the use of expectant officials as documented in a memorial drafted by the official San Bao.²⁶⁸ The desirability of the position and its being offered as a reward for meeting quotas fueled the collection process. Guy describes the scarce post as one that someone with a *juren* degree was eligible for.²⁶⁹ Tilemann Grimm explains the prestige of the position by stating that "a wholly satisfactory resolution of the jurisdictional conflicts [between educational intendants and other officials] did not come about until Ch'ing times, when the provincial educational intendant (the 'Literary Chancellor') was put on an equal footing with other highest-level provincial authorities."²⁷⁰ It was clear how attaining the position was an especially large reward. Therefore, while fear and intimidation were certainly factors, appealing to the social interests of those who were to collect texts greatly fueled efforts. Imposing imperial agendas was not the only strategy.

Other efforts to appeal to certain interests of the gentry in order to acquire books included conferring personal inscriptions by the emperor, rewarding those who sent more than five hundred books with copies of works such as *The Complete collection of illustrations and writings from the earliest to current times* (*Gujin tushu jicheng* 古今图

²⁶⁶ Ibid., Chapters 3-5.

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 173-76.

²⁶⁸ Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition*, 39.

²⁶⁹ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 173-74.

²⁷⁰ Tilemann Grimm, "Ming Educational Intendants," in *Chinese Government in Ming Times: Seven Studies*, edited by Charles O. Hucker (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 133.

书集成), and being named in the *Siku quanshu*.²⁷¹ Guy also explains how those who contributed books to the *Siku* project were rewarded with copies of imperially sponsored works such as the *Gujin Tushu jicheng* and the *Dictionary of Rhymes (Peiwen Yunfu 佩文韵府)*.²⁷² In addition to these specific rewards, Guy also briefly mentions economic interests of those the emperor and the bureaucracy tried to appeal to. Not only does he explain how imperial household officials discussed the market price of such works, he also explains a possible reason for the apparent reluctance for some book owners to lend books:

The reasons for this were hardly matters to be discussed in official or private sources; but it may well have been that book merchants or those who invested in books, realizing that reprinting under government auspices would lower the value of their holdings, sought compensation. To the extent that publishing was an industry in eighteenth-century China, the Ssu-k'u project put the government in competition with private entrepreneurs. The burden of paying for books was placed on the governors, and the emperor rejected one governors' perhaps somewhat wistful suggestion that books purchased by governors become part of provincial libraries. Instead, all books purchased for the project became part of the imperial library.²⁷³

Goodrich in his brief mention of how the Jiangxi governor paid double the price of seditious works highlights the importance of economic interest for encouraging book owners to submit various works.²⁷⁴ Bai states that booksellers and the state formed a

²⁷¹ Bai, *Qianlong zhuan*, 222-223.

²⁷² Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 90-91. The Complete collection of illustrations and writings from the earliest to current times *Gujin Tushu Jicheng* () is a vast encyclopedic work composed during the reigns of Kangxi and Yongzheng. Yongzheng gave exclusive credit to Kangxi despite one of Yongzheng's brothers having patronized it for some time. Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 86. The *Peiwen Yunfu* is a rhyme dictionary compiled under Kangxi's patronage.

²⁷³ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 91.

²⁷⁴ Goodrich, *The Literary Inquisition*, 38-39.

commercial relationship, that book collectors and officials formed a borrowing and lending relationship, and that the basic interests of book collectors were protected.²⁷⁵

In addition to providing additional information about official awareness of the importance of financial compensation to book owners to maximize the number of books sent in for the *Siku Quanshu* project, I also discuss below the roles designed by officials for members of the local elites in assisting with various aspects of the *Siku Quanshu* project. Guy touches upon the importance of assistance by non-official members of society by explaining the importance of using people who were more appropriate for approaching book collectors than local educational officials who staffed book bureaus created to interact with collectors.²⁷⁶ This chapter demonstrates that members of the local elite, such as booksellers and literati, aside from providing books for officials to collect, were also recruited to provide more active assistance as well. Booksellers were valued not only for the books they had in their possession, but also for their detailed knowledge of books that officials had difficulty tracking down. The reinforcing of political legitimacy through the public collection of print media required active cooperation between officials and the local elite.

This active cooperation affects our understanding of the relationship between the state and society during the eighteenth century. Guy argues that the project was conceived of as a literary inquisition in its later stages. He also explains the late systemization of censorship efforts, and the difficulties in stemming the social disruption caused by overzealousness in meeting quotas through collectors padding their findings

²⁷⁵ Bai, *Qianlong zhuan*, 220.

²⁷⁶ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 88-91. Actually, those in the book bureaus who were to evaluate books were not only educational officials. The governor-general of Fujian and Zhejiang explained how knowledgeable scholars (*tongru*) were to be selected for appraising books. *ZXSKQSDA*, p. 64

with works of questionable worth or seditious quality. Therefore, in countering the image of an imposing state, Guy portrays a state overwhelmed by the turbulence of social phenomena that they managed to curtail with great effort.

Considering the roles that the local elite played in assisting the project under the direction of officials allows us to modify the emphasis on the state's limitations. The assistance of the local elite, as active as it was, was still guided by officials. Members of the local elite played their roles after being recruited by officials. Compared to how they gave liberty to those outside officialdom to print, publish, and circulate politically legitimizing works, officials were much more controlling when it came to the *Siku quanshu* project. There does not seem to have been much dialogue between them and the officials who requested their help. The significant degree of involvement of the local elite in the project was still under the control of officials.

There does not seem to have been much more dialogue between officials and the emperor concerning the collection and evaluation of books. While they were generally fulfilling the emperor's objectives in advancing the project, officials do not seem to have consulted the emperor for advice concerning the collection, delivery, or evaluation of manuscript or printed texts. Much of the project advanced through bureaucratic initiative. Officials used individual judgment in determining which books were suitable for inclusion. Compared to the relationship between the bureaucracy and the local elite, that between the emperor and the bureaucracy seems to have been much looser. In the collection of print media in order to showcase a positive image of the emperor, we have a bureaucracy that demonstrated initiative and authority, cooperative elites, and a relatively distant emperor. This is different from the relationship between state and society seen in

efforts to eliminate seditious material, when the emperor and the bureaucracy exhibited more unified and forceful intervention.

I also explain in this chapter that guided efforts to search for taboo works began earlier than the period Guy gives for the systemization of censorship efforts. He describes the 1780s as a time when a master index of forbidden titles and censorship boards was created to control the rampant social disruption that overzealous searching was fomenting.²⁷⁷ Without detracting from the enormity of the destruction of the campaign, this chapter aims to show how there was some effort to regulate the search for taboo content at least some time before the 1780s.

The nature of the strategies used to collect books also enriches our understanding of the nature of the Qing state. The sources indicate that many of the practices used to mobilize aid and track books and mark taboo content were initiated by officials. While the *Siku quanshu* project may have originated with the emperor, it was the officials who advanced the search for books with suggestions to help track books, to search for and eradicate taboo content, and to mobilize the aid of social groups. What is noteworthy is the perfunctory nature of Qianlong's responses to many of these suggestions, few of them indicating that he did more than read and note them. This is similar to the brevity of his comments on memorials discussing the circulation of imperial works. This distant attitude contrasts with his aggressive stance towards other threats to imperial authority.²⁷⁸ Particularly telling are the emperor's extensive comments on memorials that reveal specific instructions to officials, harsh reprimands to those who hindered the campaign,

²⁷⁷ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, Chapter 6.

²⁷⁸ Philip Kuhn in his treatment of the soulstealing scandal of 1768 documents the extent to which Qianlong personally intervened in bureaucratic procedures to gain more control over the campaign to eliminate the scandal. Kuhn, *Soulstealers*, 200-15.

and despairing ruminations on the difficulty of managing bureaucratic procedures to ensure effective enforcement of imperial prerogatives. Given this very involved and concerned attitude to a major threat to social stability, it is a bit odd that Qianlong did not display a similar attitude towards the collection of seditious material.

Kuhn also depicts bureaucratic helplessness in the face of the spiraling scandal, the difficulty of apprehending and convicting suspects, and the pressure given by Qianlong to expedite the campaign. Explanations for the tardiness of the campaign that Qianlong lambasted clearly highlight the plight of officials. This contrasts with the initiative officials showed during the collection process, even when the flow of books coming in was unsatisfactory. Although Guy's explanation concerning the interests of expectant educational officials helps to explain the zeal of the literary inquisition, it does not really explain the actions taken by higher-level officials to advance the search. Perhaps they found the campaign to collect books more relevant to their interests than the campaign to eradicate the soulstealing scandal.

The Role of the Commercial Publishers

Advancement of efforts to collect books hinged on the cooperation of booksellers and private families. Gao Jin 高晉 and Sa Zai 薩載 were aware of the importance of such cooperation.²⁷⁹ They explain that the circulation of books in Zhejiang (a haven for the literati) is particularly heavy compared to other provinces, with families in the southeastern area known for having particularly rich collections. Books have circulated among other families since descendants have not held onto them. It is necessary to get to

²⁷⁹ QL 38.3.15 (4/6/1773). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0008-010.

the heart of the matter to prevent the books from disappearing. Even if the books have spread to other places they should not be difficult to collect if one tracks along different places. They mention a seller in Suzhou who specializes in old books and is familiar with their origins and circulation, as well as sellers of Huzhou who often sell books in various provinces and counties and interact with collectors of old books. Consulting these sellers and thus borrowing and copying books from places to be returned promptly would enable all to actively participate in the venture (*wubu yongyue congshi* 無不踴躍從事). They quote statements from the emperor to explain how active search and purchase of books accords with imperial instructions.

The emperor was additionally aware of how booksellers could propel the collection process. An edict describes the vast number of book-collecting families in Jiangnan and states that booksellers on book-boats all know of the whereabouts of lost books, and how that would facilitate the search.²⁸⁰ Gao Jin, Sa Zai, and San Bao were instructed to inquire broadly among booksellers on bookboats in order to maximize the number of books they obtain.²⁸¹ Officials indeed consulted the booksellers in order to locate works. The salt commissioner of Liangzhun, claiming his own shallow knowledge, had to ask booksellers whether certain books had been circulated before. The booksellers all stated that they had never been circulated.²⁸² San Bao reported having fulfilled imperial instructions by selecting several people from the book-boats and booksellers of Huzhou and giving them silver to search for books together with competent educational

²⁸⁰ *ZXSKQSDA*, p. 68

²⁸¹ *ZXSKQSDA*, p. 72

²⁸² *ZXSKQSDA*, p. 138

officials (*ling nengshi jiaoguan daitong zongxun* 令能事教官帶同蹤尋).²⁸³ The emperor and his officials therefore sought to engage booksellers, for active participation by social groups outside officialdom was crucial to the advancement of the state's collection project. The importance of the relationship with booksellers lay in not only the latter being a source of books, but also as a source of information needed to track down books and in their assistance in the search for books.

The extent to which this cooperation with booksellers pertains to the issue of the relationship between the state and the local elite depends on whether we can consider booksellers as an elite group. The elites were a diverse group composed of actual, potential, and former bureaucrats.²⁸⁴ Earning degrees through the civil service examinations was only one way to attain and maintain elite status. The elite class included merchants as well as the gentry, a major reason being the contribution of the former to all sorts of community functions.²⁸⁵ The contribution of merchants to the fulfillment of social functions suggests that booksellers can be considered part of the local elite. Efforts of booksellers to present themselves as being of high status included striving to distinguish themselves from other merchants through assisting scholarly endeavors in the purveying of books. Engagement in the particular trade of bookselling enabled them to form relationships with other elite groups such as officials and

²⁸³ *ZXSKQSDA*, p. 141

²⁸⁴ Joseph W. Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin, "Introduction," in *Chinese Local Elites and Patterns of Dominance*, edited by Joseph W. Esherick and Mary Backus Rankin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

²⁸⁵ The fusion of merchant and gentry roles contributed to social reconstruction after the Taiping rebellion. Rankin, *Elite Activism*, 7. Qianlong's appeal to the interests of merchants during his southern tours attests to the social importance. Chang, *A Court on Horseback*, Chapter 5. The government needed the merchants to assist in tax collection. Mann, *Local Merchants*, 1-51.

examination candidates. Participation in community affairs further enhanced their status.²⁸⁶

The ability of booksellers to interact with other elite groups may have inclined officials to cooperate closely with them in collecting books for the *Siku Quanshu* project. Cooperating with officials would likely have enhanced the status of booksellers as well. The participation of booksellers in this project is another example of active cooperation between officials and the local elite in the context of state efforts to strengthen political legitimacy through the bibliographic project. This example of a non-gentry elite group providing important assistance to officials in the collection of books contrasts with Guy's focus on the role that scholars played in advancing the project, despite a brief mention of the role that merchants played in approaching gentry families for books.²⁸⁷

The role that booksellers and other merchants played in the *Siku Quanshu* project reminds us that commercial transactions were important in acquiring books. This is reflected in a memorial where Gao Jin and Sa Zai praise the emperor for his grace, consideration, and sincerity, such that all families with books should be grateful for such kindness and offer their works. They had already instructed their subordinates to buy books and established a bureau in Suzhou, assigning others to manage this affair.²⁸⁸

The importance of commercial transactions and cooperation between officials and elites is especially highlighted in the acquisition of the *The Yongle Encyclopedia* (*Yongle Dadian* 永樂大典). The abovementioned memorial indicated the need to look for lost parts of this work. The same officials drafted another memorial some days later to explain that it was being tracked, and that there are those who would rather sell what

²⁸⁶ Brokaw, *Commerce in Culture*, Chapter 8.

²⁸⁷ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 90.

²⁸⁸ QL 38.3.15 (4/6/1773). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0008-010.

remains of the work. They also explain the importance of sending officials to Susong 蘇松 to interact with “book-boats” for consultation in order to buy more books. Officials were permitted to pay large prices, since circulating copies were already few and since families were hiding books.²⁸⁹

The emperor recognized the need to acquire rare works through purchase. San Bao explains that volumes of the *Yongle Dadian* must be circulating in society. He instructed subordinates to look for and buy lost books, and to be especially on the lookout for the *Yongle Dadian*. He ordered the prefect of Huzhou to select smart educational officials to bring silver taels to booksellers in order to purchase books from various places. If original versions were found, large amounts of money was not to be spared in their purchases.²⁹⁰ The fact that books were commodities could also work against officials searching for books. The same memorial by San Bao mentioned above also states that the inquiring of a family surnamed Zhao revealed that, because of a decrease in family property, books were either sold or lost. This surely exacerbated any particular difficulty of locating these specific works. Booksellers as well as other elites clearly played an important role in facilitating the acquisition of valuable works for the emperor’s grand bibliographic project.

While appealing to the interests to the booksellers was important, it was not to be the only strategy used to collect books. Relying on the aid of the gentry was also critical.

²⁸⁹ QL 38.3.20 (4/11/1773). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0008-011.

²⁹⁰ QL 38.3.26 (4/17/1773). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0008-014.

The Aid of the Gentry

Official reliance on the aid of the gentry was indispensable to collecting books. The governor-general of Liangjiang Gao Pu realized and recommended that local men were to be entrusted to search for books (*tuo bendi dushu yuanbo zhi ren daiwei fangmi* 託本地讀書淵博之人代為訪覓). These instructions were given at the same time that educational officials were entrusted with heading over to booksellers with money to purchase books. This shows that reliance on both officials and gentry in procuring books was simultaneous.²⁹¹ The Governor of Henan He Wei described his concerns that local officials would claim to be unable to personally collect books on the pretext of administrative duties. He also expressed his concern that they would exaggerate reports and rely on yamen runners. These possible actions would result in book-collecting families fearing implication, as well as careless and perfunctory performance. He explained the need for particular people to collect books and stated that educational officials who edited books were often on close terms with literati and were also familiar with the local population, facilitating the fulfillment of tasks (*yu wen mo zhi shi zui wei qinjin, bu bendi zhi ren duoyou shishu, fangban zishu jiaoyi* 與文墨之士最為親近，與本地之人多有識熟，訪辦自屬較易).²⁹² Gao Pu in another memorial also reported how he entrusted local well-read men to search for books, in addition to entrusting educational officials with purchasing books from various places.²⁹³

It was important to placate the concerns of book-collecting families. Studies have elaborated the fears of the gentry due to earlier literary inquisitions carried out during the

²⁹¹ QL 38.4.8 (5/28/1773). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0008-016.

²⁹² QL 38.4.15. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0008-021.

²⁹³ QL 38.5.4 (6/23/1773). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0008-027.

Kangxi and Yongzheng periods and concerns over not getting their books back after lending them to officials.²⁹⁴ The Governor of Guangxi Xiong Xuepeng quoted an edict (that Guy has also translated) in which Qianlong noted the possibility of those not making their collections public due to the works possibly containing taboo content and decrying it to be a shame, describing the inevitability of errors made by literati when composing works and the need to collect a diverse range of works. Qianlong stated that, since the prejudices of people in the past do not concern the present, there was no need to be excessively fearful. He goes on to declare his open and aboveboard manner in dealing with affairs and his ability to secure the trust of those in the world.²⁹⁵

These statements constitute an attempt to establish his character as a moral scholar in order to allay the concerns of the literati and win their trust. He also displays great confidence in his attempt to allay those who feared being held responsible for taboo content. He stresses the need to mollify literati concerns in explaining that the populace would be happy to oblige if the local officials refrain from relying on clerks who could end up stirring trouble, as well as how works were to be returned in good condition after being lent out.²⁹⁶

Qianlong also showed great confidence in an edict quoted by the governor-general of Shaangan Le Er and the governor of Shaanxi Bi Yuan.²⁹⁷ The edict describes how foolish people in remote villages who do not know books may own lost and incomplete works, some of which may contain material disrespectful of the classics. It also describes how some families with book collections may have descendants in decline,

²⁹⁴ Bai, *Qianlong zhuan*, 220-221; Sun, Zhang, and Zheng, *Qianlong di*, 339-40.

²⁹⁵ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 159-60.

²⁹⁶ QL 38.10.25. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0009-034.

²⁹⁷ QL 43.3.25 (4/21/1778). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0011-003.

with broken hampers and cases filled with books all containing taboo content that they may be ignorant of. The edict instructs that if there are books that contain wild and seditious works, then the governors and governor-generals should vigorously investigate the matter and allow the voluntary surrender of the books without charging of crimes. In addition to how this gesture could have contributed to a magnanimous image, it was also probably meant to elicit the maximum number of books, for the edict also instructed officials to order households to give books regardless of whether they were complete or incomplete. There are also instructions that the compensation given to the families were to double the price of the books. This imperial attempt to display magnanimity is significant given how punitive the campaign was to become later on.

The willingness to hand out such amounts of money along with the instructions against charging people with crimes in certain circumstances indicates attempts to lure book owners into handing over books rather than simply compelling them to do so. Maximizing the number of books to be collected through methods other than penal measures was likely to have contributed to the success of the bibliographic project that was meant to be a statement of Qianlong's support for polite learning.

Another example of an attempt to root out seditious material through the use of funds involved efforts to purchase such works. In 1777, a writer-cum-publisher Wang Xihou was arrested for his alledged vilification of the *Dictionary Commissioned by Kangxi* (*Kanagxi zidian* 康熙字典). Wang compiled a dictionary *Ziguan* 字贯 based on Kangxi's dictionary. The Qianlong emperor was enraged by such an effrontery and regarded Wang's dictionary a outrageous act of disrespect for his grandfather. Qianlong's reaction was due to several reasons. One was Wang's criticism in preface of

the organization of the *The Kangxi Dictionary*, a work that Kangxi had commissioned. Another was Wang's use of the full temple names of Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, which was considered disrespectful. A third was Wang's claim of descent from the mythical emperor Huangdi.²⁹⁸ He ordered a full investigation of Wang's publishing activities and an exhaustive search for all the books Wang had published. Following his mandate, the Governor-General of Liangjiang Gao Pu ordered the search for and purchase of Wang Xihou's 王锡侯 dictionary *Ziguan* 字貫. Bookstores in Jiangning submitted 8,327 volumes of taboo materials. He also reported how the provincial administration commissioner of Jiangning repeatedly sent personnel to buy books, with 114 copies of Wang Xihou's dictionary *Ziguan* being handed in along with other works.²⁹⁹

It is interesting that money was offered to those who were selling a work deemed disrespectful to rulers. Even more interesting is Qianlong's perfunctory reply to the memorial, simply noting that he read it, as opposed to demanding punitive measures to be taken against those from whom the work was to be bought

Gentry who aided the government in printing and distributing Qianlong's politically legitimizing works also helped in the search for forbidden books. The Governor of Shaanxi Bi Yuan repeatedly ordered local officials to find upright and experienced gentry to search book-owning families. By using the gentry to search for books, Bi argues, families possessing suspicious books might be more cooperative than if officials or runners were sent.³⁰⁰ Gao Pu entrusted well-read gentry to visit bookstores in order to purchase rare texts and send them to his office. Official reliance on gentry to

²⁹⁸ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 175.

²⁹⁹ QL 43.3.25 (4/21/1778). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-011.

³⁰⁰ QL 43.7.23. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-026.

collect books suggests they also played a role in evaluating which texts might be included in the larger project.³⁰¹ San Bao likewise explained to the Qianlong that he relied on book connoisseurs, like the famous collector Bao Shigong 鮑士恭 because of the trust local communities placed in them and their noted ability to track down rare texts.³⁰² In another memorial, San Bao relayed that he repeatedly ordered educational officials to select and dispatch upright village gentry to collect books.³⁰³ Similarly, Gao Pu instructed local men of learning to inquire after and search for books.³⁰⁴

There were times when locality was not to be a factor. The Governor of Anhui noted how not all the books of a particular place were written by native residents of that place. He explained that not considering whether the books collected were actually produced in a given place would widen the channels of collection.³⁰⁵ This would have meant more people having the opportunity to have their works included in the *Siku* project, reinforcing the bond of the gentry to the state. However, the inattention to be paid to the native place of a book's author probably meant less of a chance for the local elite to highlight local identity.

Officials also participated in the evaluation of books. There were two major reasons for officials' direct involvement in reading and evaluating books. There were officials undertook the task in earnest out of concern for career prospects. Others had doubts about the scholarly ability of the ordinary literati. Kent Guy observes that members of the commission overseeing the *Siku Quanshu* project often struck compromises between scholarly interests and political concerns pertaining to

³⁰¹ *ZXSKQSDA*, 197.

³⁰² *ZXSKQSDA*, 253.

³⁰³ QL 43.7.26 (9/16/1778). *GZDA*, *WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-027.

³⁰⁴ *ZXSKQSDA*, 110-111.

³⁰⁵ *ZXSKQSDA*, 96.

advancement and administrative procedures reflected diverging interests between scholars and officials. However, he also points out that the border between the two was permeable.³⁰⁶ Officials who were not confident or interested in reviewing books submitted to them would have to hire scholars to assist them. Gao Pu expressed his concern over his inability to evaluate the books that bureaus and officials are sending him due to the shallowness of his learning and his frequent trips to perform official duties. He suggested that one of his legal secretaries (*muyou*), a Zhejiang native named Wu Jiangyuan 吴蒋源, was widely learned and trustworthy and would help him evaluate the books. But mindful of Qianlong's concern about the common problems of "seditious" and "disrespectful remarks" involving the Manchus, Gao was careful to point out to Qianlong that, out of the books that he sends him, he carefully read the works by authors of the late Ming and early Qing. Therefore, even though he could not read all of the books, he got a general outline of them before sending a memorial.³⁰⁷

Gao's memorial is significant in that it indicates that high-ranking officials such as a governor-general also participated in the evaluation of books; as was his reliance on his secretary in the process. Officials of all ranks, not just self-motivated expectant officials, seem to have placed crucial roles in the collection and evaluation of books.

The second reason for officials to review books personally was the concern about the lack of scholarly ability among ordinary literati. Despite the numerous officials who relied on local elites to collect and evaluate texts for the project, some officials expressed concern about their real scholarly abilities. Bi Yuan in the previously quoted memorial expressed concern that the local gentry may not be literate or smart enough to spot taboo

³⁰⁶ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 68.

³⁰⁷ *ZXSKQSDA*, 258-259.

words and phrases. Bi ordered the towns and villages to submit any poetry and prose collections by Ming authors, unofficial histories, and rarely seen books to his yamen for personal inspection. All works containing taboo works were to be forwarded to Beijing while all others returned to their owners. Bi's concern about the limitations of the local elite in evaluating texts properly was probably one reason the state took a more active role in the process.

Pre-publication Censorship

During the process of collecting and reviewing books for inclusion in the *Siku quanshu*, some officials considered and recommended pre-publication censorship as a means for stamping out seditious ideas. San Bao, governor-general of Huguang recommended all scholars who wished to print works send original and duplicate copies of their manuscripts to government instructor (*jiaoguan* 教官) of his residential area for forwarding to an educational official. Once the work was deemed acceptable, the scholar would be permitted to publish it. Any work printed without official permission would be banned and destroyed upon discovery whether it contained taboo content or not. Carvers were to be instructed to search for official seals when asked to print any new works. Qianlong's response to San Bao's memorial was to note that a draft edict on the subject had already been prepared.³⁰⁸ In either case, San Bao's memorial suggests that some efforts were made to tighten state censorship over the publishing industry and would be coupled with post-publication efforts to control content.

³⁰⁸ QL 43.3.25 (4/21/1778). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-009.

The importance of officials to manage the collection process is also reflected in how they needed to assert authority in order to deal with specific problems. Qianlong stressed the importance of managing officials, exhorting them to ensure that yamen runners were not profiting from the project nor dismissing instructions. Officials were ordered to keep strict watch on any yamen runners to ensure they did not steal or substitute books or engaged in extortion of local elite families. Governor-generals and governors were to be held responsible if yamen runner malfeasance were reported by circuit intendants. Le and Bi explained instructions concerning how borrowed books were to be returned to families after being copied, with checks being made to ensure that there was no loss of books or theft. Officials at the provincial and county level were ordered to ensure that yamen clerks were not acquiring profit through an incident regarding a number of incomplete books that were requested through a list. There were instructions concerning both the return of original copies and the impeachment of local officials upon being notified of abuses such as relying on clerks and stealing and/or substituting books and extortion.³⁰⁹ Authority of officials was regarded as crucial in preventing abuses that would derail the collection process. Officials also subsidized the printing of desired works. Local officials were ordered to provide ink and paper and to cover the production costs for the printing of collections. These measures indicate a significant assertion of bureaucratic initiative intended to prevent problems associated within the collection of texts.

The governor of Henan He Weizou 何燭奏 displayed bureaucratic initiative by stating his concern that local officials would either make exaggerated statements to the

³⁰⁹ QL 38.10.25. *GZDA*, *WJL*, document 04-01-32-0010-003.

government or claim they had to rely on clerks because of their onerous duties, which would lead book-collecting families to hide their books for fear of being implicated by false charges of the runners. The governor recommended the formation of a professional staff, in concert with local educational officials, to collect books. After consulting with his financial administration commissioner, He argued that choosing educational officials of sincere character, meticulous habits, and broad learning would be the best method to purchase books because book-owning families would be saved any harassment.

He's memorial demonstrates the proactive nature of the bureaucracy in the collection of books for the *Siku quanshu* project. It is officials, rather than expectant officials, who were making decisions about how to evaluate and select people to carry out the collection process. Such memorials also evince a high level of confidence in that they are reporting to the emperor rather than asking his advice. Qianlong was simply presented with the usual ritualistic requests for imperial perusal of their actions. As expected, the Qianlong emperor responded to most of their memorials in a perfunctory manner simply by noting that he had seen their report.³¹⁰ Furthermore, the report is dated the fifteenth day of the fourth month of the thirty-eighth year, which is after the soul stealing case studied by Philip Kuhn, where Qianlong in frustration over bureaucratic handling of the case attempted to circumvent the routine evaluation process by personally interviewing and appraising staff. That he should be content with officials taking personnel matters into their own hands concerning a matter after that is a bit odd, especially since the governor alludes to the possibility of social instability as a result of possible bureaucratic incompetence and malfeasance. The concern over placating the fear of families and the possibility of harassment and implication indicates that officials

³¹⁰ *ZXSKQSDA*, 100-101,

were aware of the possibility of social instability. This awareness contrasts oddly with how the overzealousness of both expectant educational officials and certain gentry exacerbated the chaos during the literary inquisition.³¹¹

Officials also approached the collection process in a planned fashion. The Governor-General of Yunnan and Guizhou Li Shiyao and the Governor of Yunnan Fei Zongxi both discussed the collection of seditious material in their memorials to the emperor. they described clearly in details in a list the parts of various books that were to be censured., The list was complete with markers, for submission in a request for imperial approval.³¹² The governor of Shanxi Jueluo Bayansan ordered subordinates at the provincial and county level, as well as instructors, to compose lists of books to be sought.³¹³ The Governor-General of Guangdong and Guangxi Gui Lin 桂林 and the Governor of Guangdong Li Zhiying 李質穎 explain to the emperor that they had ordered provincial financial commissioners to dispatch education officials to visit bookstores in the provincial cities, prefectures, and counties to inspect books currently being sold and register them. Upon careful reading, the educational officials were to mark each taboo word and phrase with labels and send the works for gathering and inspection, after which they would be sent for imperial perusal.³¹⁴ The Governor of Henan Zheng Dajin 鄭大進 reported how upon investigating the reason why books were slow in being sent to his office discovered widespread ignorance about forbidden titles. Zheng inspected and tallied forbidden books bought from Jiangsu and discovered that the works of the convicted writers Wang Xihou and Xu Shukui were not included in over nine hundred

³¹¹ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 182-96.

³¹² QL 43.3.39 (4/25/1778). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-012.

³¹³ QL 43.6.12 (7/5/1778). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-021.

³¹⁴ Dated the second month of the forty-fourth year. *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-047.

works submitted for his inspection.³¹⁵ He states that he will draft a list and order the provincial administration commissioner Rong Zhu 榮柱 to print and distribute it to schools in the various counties and prefectures.³¹⁶ In keeping such efforts, governor of Henan Mu Helan 穆和蘭 ordered the forwarding and posting of lists of abridged classics sent by Jiang Zhaokui 蔣兆奎 and Guo Shixun 郭世勛 at crossroads to inform scholars that these books were forbidden.³¹⁷

Thus, while the definition of what constituted a forbidden work may not have been clearly defined, it is clear that officials had lists and titles in mind while searching for forbidden works, and that they used specific methods to identify and handle such materials. The timing of many of these memorials reporting such guided and focused search efforts (1778) means that some degree of systematization of censorship efforts began slightly earlier than December 1780. Guy marks the latter time as the beginning of what he outlines as the third stage of censorship efforts, when, after a first stage that saw little banning of books and a second stage that saw ill-defined guidelines and rewards for quotas contribute to overzealousness, accusations and social disruption, the campaign began to show systematization that was reflected in the creation of censorship boards, a master list of proscribed works, and a statement of criteria for defining seditious materials. The abovementioned memorials show that, even in the midst of social disruption, the Qing bureaucracy was refining its efforts to search for seditious material.

³¹⁵ Xu Shukui was a Jiangsu poet whose son wrote a poem that Qianlong deemed derogatory to the Manchus. J. D. Schmidt, *Harmony Garden: The Life, Literary Criticism, and Poetry of Yuan Mei (1716–1798)* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 379.

³¹⁶ QL 43.11.28 (1/15/1779). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0012-035.

³¹⁷ QL 58.5.19 (6/26/1793). *GZDA, WJL*, document 04-01-32-0021-09.

Evaluating the Quality of Books

The need for officials to exercise their judgment was even greater when it came to evaluating the quality of books. Aside from rooting out seditious material, officials also endeavored to filter out works they deemed useless. The Governor-General of Liangjiang Gao Jin 高晉 explains how officials, in solemn accordance with imperial instructions, made sure that books that expounded on human nature and government and that pertained to both the world and the human mind and that were practical were included.³¹⁸ This echoes Qianlong's instructions on only including useful books containing real learning as reflected in his edict issued in 1771,³¹⁹ as well as another edict concerning the compilation of the *Siku huanshu huiyao* ordering literary officials (*cichen* 詞臣) to investigate in detail which works should be printed, copied, and stored.³²⁰ The governor-general's explanation indicates the need for officials to exercise judgment in determining the usefulness of books. This is similar to Gao Pu explaining how, in evaluating books sent by literati, he eliminated ordinary books and selected works suitable for inclusion with the classics and works on philosophy and history.³²¹

This need for individual judgment is also reflected in a memorial by the salt commissioner of Liangzhun in which he explains how he used his "shabby judgment" to select 240 works he had not seen before.³²² Occasionally, Qianlong would want to participate in the evaluation of books. he personally wanted to examine a copy of the *An Examination of Past Opinions* (*Rixia jiuwen kao* 日下舊聞考).³²³ However, it seems that

³¹⁸ ZXSKQSDA, 80.

³¹⁹ Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*, 36-37.

³²⁰ ZXSKQSDA, 108.

³²¹ Ibid., 151.

³²² Ibid., 128.

³²³ Ibid., 129.

much of the work of evaluating the quality of books and determining which works were to be included in the *Siku Quanshu* was initiated by officials and supplemented by the assistance of those outside officialdom.

It appears that even within official circles, books were evaluated at different levels within the large bureaucratic hierarchy. The Governor-General of Zhili Zhou Yuanli 周元理 described how books had their summaries and titles included in lists sent for imperial perusal.³²⁴ The books themselves were later sent for evaluation and the governor-general will respectfully wait for the lists to be handed to court officials for evaluation. It seems that Qianlong was at least informed about developments. . Another example of how books were evaluated at different levels is how the educational official (*xuezheng* 学政) of Shaanxi Yang Sizeng 楊嗣曾 reported how subordinates were sent to bookstores to choose works worthy of being included and report lists in memorials. He also reported how, among works presented by students, vulgar poetry and prose were excluded, while those of decent quality were included.³²⁵ Officials had to judge the quality of works as well as trust the judgment of their subordinates. The evaluation of books by different officials at different levels of government raises the question of discrepancy of judgment concerning books and any disagreements that may have resulted from this. This question is particularly interesting as it would help determine how much uniformity there was in terms of scholarly standards between different levels of the government.

There is also the question of how much of a discrepancy there was between what Qianlong and his officials thought constituted a useful book. Qianlong explained that the

³²⁴ Ibid., 121-122

³²⁵ *ZXSKQSDA*, 130.

aim of the project was to find rare books that were beneficial to moral cultivation so they might be printed and circulated while other texts could simply be copied and grouped into anthologies. Books that contained vulgar, shallow, and erroneous content were to simply have their titles included in an overall list. He complained that books that were not worthy of being included were being printed and copied, while rare books that should be included were being hidden, so that scholars did not have access to them. The edict ends with instructions to the officials to discuss among themselves on how to evaluate books and report their decisions to him.³²⁶

Whatever discrepancies there may have been, official efforts to include what they thought of as useful books indicates a general concurrence regarding the state's attempt to define scholarly standards through book collection, similar to the effort to eliminate improperly abridged versions of the classics discussed as in Chapter Three.

Conclusion

Preserving and making literary works available to the reading public was a cardinal value of the Han literati. The Siku quanshu project Qianlong commissioned was such an effort par excellence. By initiating and patronizing such a voluminous Book collection, the Manchu emperor fully demonstrated his commitment to the preservation and promotion of Chinese literary culture. Such an effort might be judiciously deemed a political act aiming at securing the loyalty and support of the Han literati through both positive patronage and negative censorship of seditious and hostile writings. Despite its menace and destruction of some literary works, the project itself was a proclamation of political legitimacy of the Manchu regime, whose embrace and promotion of Han literary

³²⁶ ZXSKQSDA, 117.

culture surpassed the emperors of previous dynasties. This chapter highlights how the collection of books by the Qing state to bolster political legitimacy involved a variety of channels, practices, and people. The state in regulating the book collecting process demonstrated an ability to adjust its degree of involvement. It could exercise relatively indirect influence by deploying local gentry to search for books, but it could also be proactive in handling other issues such as prevention of abuses. The bureaucracy demonstrated a great deal of initiative in organizing various aspects of the collection process. Officials at various levels also exercised their judgment in evaluating the quality of books and determining which books deserved inclusion. Members of the local elite were also quite active in their assistance of the collection process. Rather than simply providing books for collectors, booksellers provided valuable information about the whereabouts of books. The gentry participated in collecting and evaluating books along with officials. The dependence of the state on a diversity of social actors and channels, along with various strategies devised for targeting taboo content, indicate an approach for collecting books that, like the approach to circulating politically legitimizing texts, was multifaceted.

Compared to the circulation of politically legitimizing texts, the state seems to have exercised more influence when it came to the collection of works to consolidate political legitimacy. However, there was still considerable room for elites to actively contribute to collecting the works needed for the project. Like the circulation process, this complicates our understanding of relations both between state and society and within the state itself.

Conclusion

This dissertation has addressed questions concerning the relationship between the Qing state and the Han Chinese through an examination of the Manchu rulers' attempts to assert political legitimacy through the use of print media. To assert his legitimacy, the Qianlong Emperor appealed to the values of the Han Chinese literati by expounding on Confucian statecraft and literary composition in his writings. A variety of social groups, including officials and different elite groups, utilized different channels, including the commercial book market and academies, to facilitate the circulation of these writings. The authoring of these texts by the emperor and their distribution by these groups constitutes a subtle attempt by the state to project its influence. Subtlety is also reflected in the involvement of these same groups in their collection of books for a grand bibliographic project designed to showcase the emperor's patronage of learning. Altogether, these strategies constituted the use of soft power in the eighteenth century. The state's use of the print medium to positively portray a political figure, the mobilization of different social groups to circulate such a portrayal, and the use of institutions designed to widen such circulation to a broad audience were all part of the efforts of the eighteenth-century Qing state to produce and publicize the political legitimacy of Manchu rule. Mid-Qing strategies to project soft power were similar to efforts by modern states to portray themselves to the people under their rule. The subtlety of these strategies is still obvious even as Qianlong shifted towards portraying himself as a more imposing figure in his later writings through an emphasis on hierarchical relationships and loyalty. Overall, the attempt to influence the perceptions of

the people under their rule with a minimum of imposition complicates characterizations of the Qing state as authoritarian.

These specific strategies of soft power also say much about how the construction and performance of cultural identity cannot be fully understood without considering the technological and cultural conditions, particularly in a multiethnic empire. The recent attention of scholars towards different cultural strategies in governing different ethnic groups under Qing rule should not obscure the importance of appealing to the cultural and literary values of the largest group that the Manchus governed using media and institutions such as print media and commercial publishing that had long become part of Han Chinese culture. Governance without resort to brute force and fear would have necessitated the adoption of cultural and practical technologies of the populations under control. The Manchu emperors had to employ printing to produce and disseminate legitimizing images, which circulated widely beyond the military presence of Banner troops.

The Manchu rulers themselves had to master those cultural and literary skills endeared to the Han Chinese literati in order to perform convincingly to their Han Chinese subjects of their “genuine” embrace of those values if those efforts were to achieve any political objectives without the blatant show of military menace. In the process of acquiring those skills, how much one can maintain a normative and epistemological distance from those values depends on the individual. Did Qianlong’s efforts in mastering and promoting Han Chinese literary skills and Confucian model of rulership expended exclusively for the purpose of political control leave any residual impact on his person? We need to caution against an overly cynical interpretation that

would dismiss these efforts as purely a political performance, for it is unlikely that Qianlong, an emperor who was so engaged with Chinese values, succeeded in dismissing entirely those values he had been imbued with during his rigorous education since childhood. His interest in collecting painting, calligraphies, and studio decors of Han Chinese literati was but a conspicuous example of the residual impact of the literary culture he had mastered and embraced inspite of any political significance he might have attached to them.

Different aspects of the endeavors of the eighteenth-century Qing state to reinforce political legitimacy concerned the relationships between the emperor, the bureaucracy, and the local elite. These relationships are reflected in the Qianlong emperor's professed stance on how his subjects were to exercise authority or defer to him. They are also reflected in the circulation of these politically legitimizing writings through bureaucratic initiative and in the intervention by officials to stimulate efforts by the local elite to aid the circulation. The initiative of the bureaucracy contrasted with the emperor's relatively distant attitude towards the circulation of his own writings. While there is more evidence of administrative interaction between him and his officials, endeavors to project political legitimacy throughout society functioned with limited intervention from Qianlong. The intervention of the emperor and his officials was more pronounced during the collection of books during the *Siku quanshu* project. However, the state's efforts to prevail in activities involving the imperial image should not obscure the active involvement by the local elites to assist in both circulating and collecting works, even though that room was granted by the state. While the state and society functioned at different levels, the level of interaction was inconstant, despite their sharing of goals in

the Siku quanshu project. There was a loose unity between the emperor, his officials, and the local elite, the closeness of such interactions depending on different aspects of the circulation and collection of texts.

There is also the question of the degree to which the project was successful. How much interaction or influence was established between the state and society? Qianlong endeavored to establish a cultural relationship with his officials and the literati through his education in the Confucian classics and his efforts to express his ideas as a practitioner of his subjects' values. Yet, while he was active in crafting his own persona, he was far less active in contributing to efforts to project it to a broader audience. While he created the *Siku quanshu* project through his edicts, he was less involved in contributing to its everyday activities, as indicated in his distance from the collection and evaluation of books.

It is true how there is much we cannot know about the reception of Qianlong's works. While memorials indicate that his writings reached bookstores, we cannot know how many people bought them. Nor can we know how readers interpreted his works. Even though his works appear to have helped some scholars prepare for the civil service examinations, we still cannot gauge accurately the extent of the influence of his writings. There are no apparent commentaries or any other records of thoughts concerning Qianlong's works.

Despite the lack of evidence on the reception of Qianlong's works, it seems likely that Qianlong's detailed elaborations on ideas cherished by the Chinese literati contributed to the stability of the first half of his reign. One can speculate how society could have rocked by greater dissatisfaction had Qianlong, his bureaucracy, and the

others who helped print and distribute texts not exerted themselves in the project to legitimate the emperor's authority. Placating the literati by appealing to their values as well as their other interests was necessary for maximizing the smoothness of Qianlong's rule.

The effectiveness of the deployment of soft power forces us to question the decline in the relationship between state and society in the later years of Qianlong's reign. Evelyn Rawski in a summary of recent historiography on the Qianlong period cautions us not to overemphasize the personal role Qianlong had in the social phenomena of the later half of the eighteenth century.³²⁷ From this, one can surmise how a number of factors both within and without the control of Qianlong and his bureaucracy overrode the stabilizing effects of the deployment of soft power.

One factor in the decline of state-society relations was the censorship efforts of the *Siku quanshu* project. Qianlong's concern over anti-Manchu sentiment that prompted this campaign indicates his suspicion that his previous endeavors were less than successful. Any positive effect on political legitimacy that the bibliographic project was supposed to have was severely marred by the fear and unrest resulting from the searches for seditious material. With regards to other factors, several problems such as the economic disparity that followed prosperity, population migration, and flaws in the bureaucratic system were, to echo Rawski's salient points, beyond the control of any person or group. While soft power was necessary for and likely contributed to the stability of the early to middle eighteenth century, there was only so much that it could do to mitigate later instability.

³²⁷ Evelyn Rawski, "Re-imagining the Ch'ien-lung Emperor: A Survey of Recent Scholarship," *The National Palace Museum Research Quarterly*, 21.2 (2003): 1-2.

The efforts to strengthen Qianlong's political legitimacy through the print medium enables us to ponder the variety of ways political authority can be exerted. Qianlong's efforts to appeal to the Han Chinese literati reflected his dependence on them as well as his need to control them. The changing levels of intervention by the emperor and the bureaucracy and the different ways in which the elite participated in the efforts to assert political legitimacy caution us to take care in applying labels to the Qing state. Assertions of authority do after all assume various forms.

Appendix

Various editions of works authored and otherwise attributed to the Qianlong emperor

Title	Year	Production	Volumes	Source
<i>Yuzuan Tang Song Wenchun</i> 御纂唐宋文醇	1738	WYD	58	GGCSMHB, vol. 1, p. 60. QNFKSDAHB, p. 750
<i>Yuzuan Tang Song Wenchun</i> 御纂唐宋文醇	1738	WYD	58	GGDBSKXCMHB, vol. 1, p. 362
<i>Yuzuan Tang Song Wenchun</i> 御纂唐宋文醇	1738	WYD	58	ZGGJSBZM, p. 1740
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song Wenchun</i> 御选唐宋文醇	1738	Neifu	58	ZGGJSBZM, p. 1740
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song Wenchun</i> , 58 v, shichun, 47 v	1750	WYD	58/47	TJTSGGJSBSM, p. 669
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇				DBDQGJXZSLHML, volume 3, p. 3135
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1760	Woodblock	47/2	DBDQGJXZSLHML, volume 3, p. 3135.
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1750	Neifu	47	TJTSGGJSBSM, p. 661
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1750	Neifu	47	ZGGJSBZM, p. 1728
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1751	WYD	47	QNFKSMLJT, p. 403
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1751	Neifu	47/2	DBDQGJXZSLHML, volume 3, p. 3135.
<i>Tang Song shichun</i> 唐宋诗醇		Suzhou Ziyang Academy 苏州紫阳书院	47/2	LSSGTCSM, p. 411. A Guizhou version can be found at GSGJLHM, p. 566
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1750	WYD	47	GGSCDBSM, vol. 1, p. 60.
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1750	WYD	47	GGDBSKXCMHB, vol. 1, p. 362
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1760	Yudai Tang 雨代堂		GSGJLHML, p. 566
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1760	Yi'an Tang 遗安堂		GSGJLHML, p. 566
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i>	1760	Shancheng		GSGJLHML, p. 566

御选唐宋诗醇		Tang 善成堂		
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1760	Woodblock		GSGJLHML, p. 566
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1760	Woodblock		GSGJLHML, p. 566
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1760	Yi'an Tang 遗安堂	47/2	SDTSGGJSBSM, p. 285
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1750		47/2	WYGSKQSML, p. 309
<i>Yuxuan Tang Song shichun</i> 御选唐宋诗醇	1750		47	LTZJZBSM, v. 4, p. 101
<i>Leshantang quanji</i> 乐善堂全集		Neifu	40/4	ZGGJSBZM, p. 1585
<i>Leshantang ji</i> 乐善堂集	1741	Unlisted	4	ZGGJSBZM, p. 1586
<i>Leshantang quanji</i> 乐善堂全集	1737	WYD	40	GGSCDBSM, vol. 1, p. 54.
<i>Yuzhi Leshantang</i> 御制乐善堂		Woodblock	4	DBDQGJXZSLHML, p. 2716.
<i>Leshantang quanji dingben</i> 乐善堂全集定本	1736 ?	Woodblock	30	DBDQGJZXXSLHML, p. 2716.
<i>Leshantang quanji dingben</i> 乐善堂全集定本	1759	WYD	30/1	DBDQGJZXXSLHML, p. 2716.
<i>Leshantang quanji dingben</i> 乐善堂全集定本	1737	WYD	40/1/1/4	DBDQGJZXXSLHML, p. 2716.
<i>Leshantang quanji dingben</i> 乐善堂全集定本	1759	Neifu	30/1	ZGGJSBZM, p. 1586
<i>Leshantang quanji</i> 乐善堂全集		Woodblock	40/4	DBDQGJZXXSLHML, p. 2716.
<i>Leshantang quanji dingben</i> 乐善堂全集定本	1758	WYD	30	GGCSMHB, vol. 1, p. 54.
<i>Leshantang quanji</i> , 40 v., mulu (table of contents), 4 v., <i>Rizhi huishuo</i> , 4 v.		Woodblock	40/4/4	DBDQGJZXXSLHML, p. 2716.
<i>Yuzhi Leshantang quanji dingben</i> 御制乐善堂全集定本			30/3	WYGSKQSML, p. 291

Abbreviations

GGCSMHB-*Gugong Cangshumu hubian* 故宫藏书目汇编 (Book Catalog of the Palace Museum), Xianzhuangshuju, 2004.

QNFKSDAHB-*Qing Neifu Keshu Dang'an Shiliao Huibian* 清内府刻书档案史料彙编 (Edited Historical Materials on Printing in the Imperial Household

Department), Weng Lianxi 翁连溪, Beijing Guanglin Shushe, 2007.

GGDBSKXCMHB-*Gugong dianben shuku xiancun mu huibian* 故宫殿本书库现存目
(Existing records of Editions from the Imperial Printing Office in the Palace
Museum), *Gugong cangshumu huibian* 故宫藏书目汇编

ZGGJSBZM-*Zhongguo guji shanben zongmu* 中国古籍善本总目 (Chinese Bibliography
of Old Books), Weng Lianxi 翁连溪, ed, Beijing Xianzhuang shuju, 2005.

TJTSGGJSBSM-*Tianjin tushuguan guji shanben shumu* 天津图书馆古籍善本书目
(Tianjin Library bibliography of old books), National Library of China, 2008.

DBDQGJXZSLHML-*Dongbei diqu guji xianzhuangshu lianhe mulu* 东北地区古籍线
装书联合目录, (Bibliography of old bound books from the Northeastern area)
Liaoning chubanshe.

QNFKSMLJT-*Qing Neifu keshu mulu jieti* 清内府刻书目录解题 (Explanation of the
Book Catalog of the Imperial Household Department), Zijincheng chubanshe,
1995.

GSGJLHML-*Guizhou sheng guji lianhe mulu* 贵州省古籍联合目录 (Guizhou
provincinal catalog of old books), Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 2007.

SDTSGGJSBSM-*Shoudu tushuguan guji shanben shumu* 首都图书馆古籍善本书目
(National Capital Library Catalog of Old Books), National Library of China, 2011.

WYGSKQSML-*Wenyuange siku quanshu mulu* 文渊阁四库全书目录 (Catalog of the
Palace Edition of the Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries), Shanghai guji
chubanshe, 1987.

MXLSSGTCSM-*Minxuan Li shi shiguoting cangshu mulu* 闽县李氏硕果亭藏书 目录,
by Li Xuangong 李宣, in *minguo shiqi sijiacang shumulu congtan* 民国时期私家
藏书目录丛刊 (Republican reprints of private bibliographies), Li Wanjian
李万健, Deng Yongqiu 邓咏秋, eds, National Library of China, 2012.

LTZJZBSM -*Lu Ting zhijian zhuanben shumu* 邵亭知见传本书目 (Lu Pavillion catalog
of books on things seen and heard), Mo Youzhi 莫友芝, Zhonghua shuju, 1993.

WYD-*Wuying Dian* 武英殿 (Imperial Printing Office)

These statistics are material used in Kai-wing Chow's paper concerning the circulation of Qing government publications in the book market. I thank him for allowing me to reproduce these statistics. Kai-wing Chow, "The Book Market and the National Publishing Industry: Circulation of Editions of the Imperial Printing Office in Japan (*Shuji shichang yu guojia chubanye: Dianbanshu zai Riben de liutong*), presented at the

International Academic Conference on Court Texts and Cultural Exchange in East Asia (*Gongting dianji yu dongya wenhua jiaoliu guoji xueshu yantaohui*), The Palace Museum, Beijing, July 2013

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